BLACK FLAG

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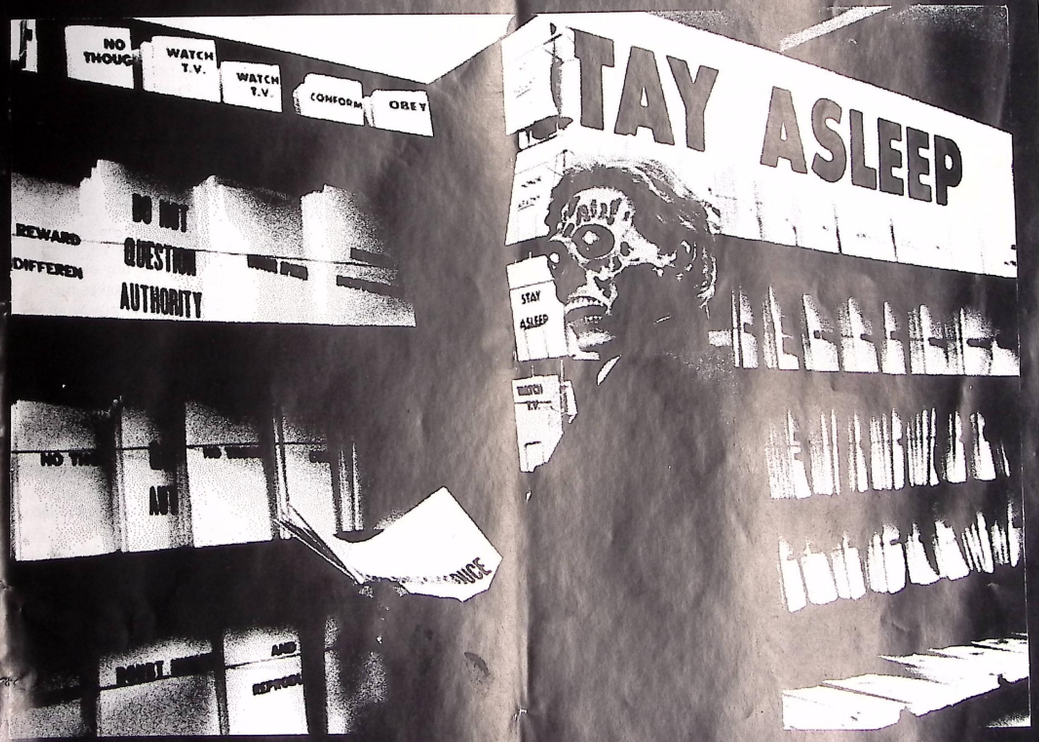
FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE



Strikes, prisoners, guns, poison, Yugoslavia, fox hunting, pornography, and more....

This issue is dedicated to the memory of Albert Meltzer.

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For a social system based on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation – against state control and all forms of government and economic repression. To establish a share in the general prosperity for all – the breaking down of racial, religious, national and sex barriers – and to fight for the life of one world.

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Editorial:

Most of our comrades and readers will have already heard of the death of our founder editor Albert Meltzer on the 7th of May. We would like to dedicate this issue to his memory, and to the cause to which he devoted his life - the advancement of class struggle Anarchism. Unfortunately we need to set a few things straight.

Most of the press in writing Albert's obituary had the benefit of Stuart Christie's tribute which we reproduce in full here. Some papers manged to confuse his support work during the Spanish Revolution and civil war with his activities in the post-war Resistance (fed on myths of the one and ignorant of the other), but at least none had him as a schoolboy member of the international brigade! Those interested in the real story are referred to the chronology in Albert's book, and to the statement from the CNT in this issue.

Elsewhere (stand up *Independent on Sunday*) the press were nominating Stuart Christie as Albert's "heir apparent" on the grounds that they had heard of him (he had been described in the 70's as Britain's best known Anarchist). I could say that we really retire to a pub, like the Vatican's cardinals and communicate by smoke signals...but they'd probably believe me.

Which brings us to the liberal (in politics if not attitude) pseudo-anarchists at *Freedom Press* who have, true to form, produced various pieces of venomous propaganda. Nicolas Walter has been running around with his tatty one-man show, "The Campaign To Convict Meltzer And Christie Of Running The Angry Brigade". You might want to put this one in the same basket as the *Evening Standard* journo who was convinced Albert ran round frightening horses at the weekend as a hunt sab, but you have to wonder what side Walter's on, if not what planet.

Vernon Richards affected amusement at Albert's involvement in Spanish resistance activities. Anyone reading the communique from the CNT should be able to make a judgement on the evidence rather than the jibes of an outsider. He bleats repeatedly about "this libellous autobiography" - why did he not raise any objections at the time of publication, when Albert could answer? Instead he makes the most of his chance to piss on the grave. We at *Black Flag* will not be so coy with our verdict on him but for the moment will give Albert a posthumous riposte to these parasites.

The last mistake to mention was our comrade Phil Ruff -understandably enough - in his tribute at the crematorium service misquoting Albert. This itself would have made a great anecdote of Albert's, I can almost hear it

"There's Phil in the pulpit, and he's claiming that I said I was a young man in a movement of young people, which of course is a nonsense, I never said that, I said I started as a young man in a movement of old people and now was an old man in a movement of youngsters ... which reminds me ... "

salud, comrade.

Green Anarchist are printing bollocks again. We are not MI5 assets. We are not easily led and at least do our research and get names right...something G.A. are incapable of. We hope that in the future they show more respect for other anarchists and the truth or take their neo-primitivist clap-trap seriously and give up the use of printing presses.

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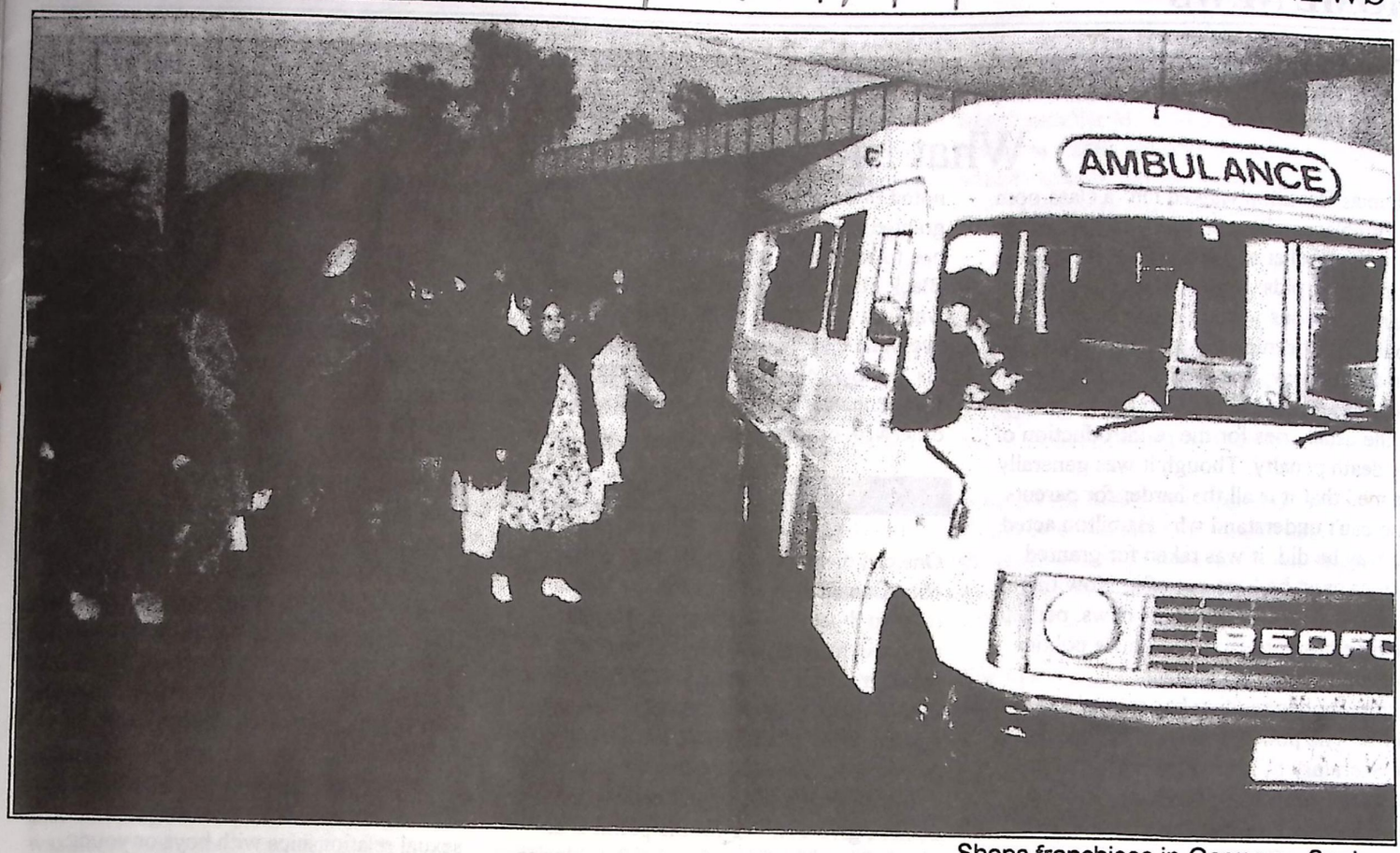


Hillingdon Strike Update

Last October 56 Asian women cleaners went on strike at Hillingdon hospital in west London. The strike is about the cuts in pay and conditions imposed by Pall Mall Hotel Services, a private contractor. Some of the strikers have worked there for 15 years and this is the third pay cut they have faced from private buccaneers. Pall Mall's directors pay themselves £140,000 a year and their parent company, Davis ServiceEll Group, made a profit of £25 million last year. They are refusing to abide by TUPE legislation which theoretically protects the pay and conditions of workers transferred to another contractor. The cuts in pay amount to 20%, or £35 per week. The strikers were sacked after refusing to sign new contracts.

After much pressure, their union Unison, the largest in the country, has declared the strike official, and the women have been picketting every day. They have endured racist abuse and attacks from other hospital staff and patients and need as much support as possible.

This support needs to be international and based on direct action as well as financial support. It is clear that Unison haven't got a clue what to do - they are used to the relatively less chaotic world of negotiating with local councils and the NHS, a cowboy firm that don't give a toss is beyond their experience, even if they were willing. It also shows the weakness of the unions' strategy of relying on European law to overcome a hostile British environment. What if the company just ignores it? Solidarity actions against subsidiaries of the Davis Group would be welcomed. Send messages of support and donations to: Hillingdon Hospital Support Campaign, Committee Room 3, Civic Suite, Uxbridge, Middlesex Tel: 01895 -255071

The Davis Group's other interests include: Elliot-Medway Construction; HSS Hire Service Group; Miller Rayner Ltd; Sunlight Service Group; St George's Services; Presco. Most of their subsidiaries seem to be in hire shops (HSS) or cleaning and laundry services. Though all are registered in the UK they do have some HSS Hire Shops franchises in Germany, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands and Malta.

ARCH UPDATE

Since our last issue, thing have moved on at the Autonomous Refugee Centre Hackney (ARCH). Peter Lilley's regulations denying benefits to asylum seekers who claim asylum after port of entry or those appealing against refusal of refugee status, have ben overturned in the Appeal Court, giving asylum seekers a temporary respite before the Asylum and Immigration Bill passes through Parliament later this year and once again removes all rights to benefits and housing.

The ARCH building in Stoke Newington was evicted but 16 new refugees have arrived. ARCH are working with these refugees to find empty properties to squat and collecting food, money, furniture etc., to help support them in their new homes. Others have managed to force the council to house them free of charge. A demonstration is planned outside Peter Lilley's house (40, Canonbury Road London N1, just in case you happen to be passing) and ARCH is active in local anti-deportation campaigns.

ARCH need others to get involved with their activities. Contact ARCH c/o Squash 0171-226 8938

The Dunblane Massacre -

What Made Hamilton Tick?

Thomas Hamilton walked into a classroom at Dunblane, where he was well known, and shot the teacher and almost the entire class of five year olds. In the national mourning many questions were raised as to how this could have been prevented. As he had killed himself anyway, like Fred West the serial murderer-rapist, there could hardly be any of the usual cries for the re-introduction of the death penalty. Though it was generally claimed that it is all the harder for parents who can't understand why Hamilton acted the way he did, it was taken for granted politics must be kept out of it. Now that it is passed over as yesterday's news, perhaps the time has come to make those politics known.

Political understanding has *everything* to do with it. The police, local councillors, even the Secretary of State for Scotland, knew the man, had interviewed him and either failed to note he displayed obvious Naziclone tendencies or more likely ignored them as irrelevant to his having a gun licence. He was not far from their own mentality, just far enough to make him a misfit.

With the gun lobby on the defensive the question was raised of peaceful farmers or local people in the Highlands and Islands needing handguns to shoot rabbits, either as a pest or for food where vegetables and fruit are rare and expensive. It should be noted that the same Scottish Office which granted a gun license to Hamilton, refused one to an Islands resident, then an editor of Black Flag with no criminal convictions, who just wanted to shoot rabbits like everyone else there. Why? On account of his 'political extremism'. For them, Hamilton was 'a bit queer perhaps but otherwise one of us.'

What is a Naziclone?

One can distinguish, though they are all obnoxious, between the fascist who wants to keep down the working class by all necessary means, and also the one who thinks it is an alternative political or racial theory which may perhaps entail violence against those naturally or forced into being defenceless. There is another type one may call the "naziclone', i.e.someone who doesn't give a shit about the political or racial side of fascism or nazism but glories in the inevitable atrocities. The fantasist-fascist of this ilk is not uncommon though often confining him/herself to a dreamland where a handsome young führer struts through Whitehall planning mayhem. They can be incited to enact their fantasies by fascist propaganda, but also by reading anti-Nazi books. They lick their lips over the Holocaust books and bemoan insufficient illustrations. Colin Brady was one such, and with his partner Myra Hindley tortured and murdered small children from around the neighbourhood.

How could Hamilton's nature have been recognised? True, he had done nothing for which he could have been charged but clearly gun licences <u>are</u> subject to political assessment. Only the Establishment found his credentials impeccable.

All naziclones have an obsession with lethal weapons, over and above any use of them. They enjoy imposing harsh discipline. Swaggering with pistols is a kick in itself. They also have an obsession with physical fitness and discipline, especially in training young men and boys. 'Strength through joy means powerlessness through control'. None of this is necessarily anti-social but it didn't need a Sherlock Holmes to find the dangers in this case.

Naziclones usually despise women and often are rapists; they sometimes have sexual relationships with boys or young men whom they can treat as women. But they equally hate homosexuals with consenting sexual urges or loving relationships. Hitler put them in the death camps, didn't he?

The naziclone from Stirling spent his time training youngsters to physical fitness. He spent his hard-earned money photographing young but fit boys in skimpy shorts. He toted as many guns as possible. He was bitter at being excluded from the bonding of the gun clubs, and refused entry into the Scout movement, after paedophiliac allegations which may or may not have been true.Why? They regarded him as a pervert, he protested. He petitioned Her Gracious Majesty but even She did not help her loyal subject. What was left to a naziclone but to act out his fantasies:- stage his own mini-holocaust and exit on a grand scale like the great man imself? And they say they can't understand it!

The debate centres on whether we should restrict gun llicences. It would be better to turn our attention to naziclones and how to restrict them socially.

a.m.

A Victory for One is A Victory for All!

In January 96, after more than two years, Minneapolis anarchist and anti-racist Kieran Frazier Knutson was found not guilty of assault.
In October 1993 Kieran had been attacked by skinheads at an anti-racist demo in Minneapolis. Kieran recieved support from all over the world during his fight.
He writes: "It was a huge victory for all of us. The prosecution thought they could harass and intimidate the anti-racist/ anti-fascist movement and imprison one of its activists. Instead it is the State that feels humiliated, thanks to the strong support fo my family and friends, the work of the Anti-Fascist Defence Committee and the long hours put in by Kieth Ellison of the Legal Rights Center."
"Our movement doesn't often get victories so it's important to celebrate them, to gather energy and inspiration for the struggles ahead."
Contact: Minneapolis ABC, PO Box 7075, Minneapolis MN 55407 USA

LESSONS FROM LIVERPOOL MUTUAL AID CENTRE

The first Mutual Aid Centre was squatted in 1987 and lasted for three months of 24 hour high profile occupation. When it was evicted by the council the deputy leaders office was occupied in protest. A few months later the second MAC was squatted. This lasted until early 1995 when it was finally evicted. The second MAC was fairly low profile with negotiations with the council, the original owner for the first few years. The landlord changed and we were left alone mostly. The second MAC wasn't occupied 24 hours a day but it was a centre of fairly intense activity for years until it fizzled out a couple of years ago.

Activities included (in no particular order) strike support, discussion meetings/videos, anti-fascism (effectively smashing Liverpool BNP), anti-poll tax, women's group, anti-sexism, visits to Northern Ireland and support for Troops Out, anti-militarism, street stalls, support for Sri Lankan refugee Viraj Mendis until after he was deported, animal rights, Anarchist Black Cross and prisoner support, food co-op and more.

Most of this activity was generated by activists in the then Liverpool Anarchist Group. Whether the MAC was an Anarchist Centre run by LAG or a libertarian centre run by all participating groups never really got sorted (partly because of negotiations with landlords). All the work was done by Anarchists. Other groups that used the centre included Anti-Clause 28 and other lesbian and gay groups, a women's sexual abuse group, Namibia support group, unemployed activist group, unemployed rambling group, Earth First!, writer's workshop, squatting advice, etc. Some of these were short lived (e.g. the writer's workshop), some lasted throughout the MAC's existence (e.g. anti-fascism).

The MAC also had silk-screen equipment, a duplicator, a weights bench etc. as well as an office. One of the rooms was originally for women only but the women's group didn't last so this changed. The MAC also hosted regional, national and international meetings.

MAC business was originally dealt with at LAG meetings, though later a committee (accountable to LAG) was set up to deal with MAC business separately. When LAG ended, in 1991, the committee was reorganised to ensure equal DAM/CW and non-aligned representation. All other groups were encouraged to send an observer. A constitution was drawn up when it seemed the centre might get a lease (based on various other constitutions including Bradford 1 in 12 Club), but the negotiations went nowhere. The Charity Commission also didn't buy the group's application for charitable status.

Money was raised from parties to pay for electricity bills and repairs and to fund various groups (the Dispatch Industry Workers Union, DAM, CW, Troops Out, AFA and more). The parties had bands, beer and veggie food with half the money going to the MAC and half to the group concerned. Hundreds of people came to these. Quite a lot of young people who didn't come to meetings, but would come out against the fascists or come to parties were politicised during all this, though not in the sense that they all wanted to pay subs...

The MAC had a lot more support than LAG itself. Towards the end the MAC was also used by bands for rehearsal rooms and occasionally by outside groups such as Red Rope or various greens for parties.

What lessons can be learnt from all this ? First, the original LAG in 1987 was full of mostly young people already active in other areas - CND, NVDA, animal rights, DAM etc. By the time LAG folded in 1991 those left supported class struggle anarchism, though some had gone back to single issue campaigns with no connection to the MAC (e.g. Hunt Sabs). In the first MAC it was a fight to stop pagan posters going up, and even then there was a list of what wasn't supposed to happen in the centre (no sexism, no meat eating etc.). Most of the moral puritanism vanished as time went on.

DAM campaigns like support for Arbride strikers (against Laura Ashley) or over Tricia Jennings' sacking did get support. Much activity happened outside the MAC with the MAC as a base. In a lot of activities - anti-fascism/anti-poll tax- which organisation you belonged to, if any, was pretty much irrelevant.

The MAC had run its course before the final eviction, mainly because the activist core declined as people went on to do other things, became burnt out or got jobs. Enthusiasm for running the place dried up (though the parties were as popular as ever). Activism continued in other areas.

Because the MAC was a squat noone would or could raise the money necessary for repairs, though some work was done. As a squat the MAC went as far as it could go.

The MAC was eventually evicted but it lasted a long time- over 7 years. Everyone involved got a lot out of it. There is a much bigger anarchist base in Liverpool now than there was in the early '80s. It's something that can be built on.

Things to avoid in a centre ?

Don't be inward looking and don't get bogged down in trying to live up to impossible standards of behaviour. Lifestyle anarchism isn't what you wear it's how you think. Trying to create a pure "island of Anarchy" leads to all sorts of problems, people falling out, accusations over nothing etc.. It's totally irrelevant to the real world.

Anarchism isn't about being pure; it's about solidarity in the class struggle, direct action, self -management. It's about being effective in the fight for social change and social revolution. Local centres can be an important part of this as a focus for organising and to link together struggles in the same area. They're tools, not ends in themselves.

Black Flag wants to hear about other similar centres so that we can learn from their mistakes and successes and uses.

For another view of anarchist/squat/DIY centres "Not for Rent-Interviews with DIY activists" (available from Active distribution. £6) covers a broad selection of projects with (sometimes excessive) enthusiasm and a few wild inaccuracies.

Albert Meltzer, anarchist, born London, January 7,1920; died, Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset, May 7, 1996.

Albert Meltzer was one of the most enduring and respected torchbearers of the international anarchist movement in the second half of the twentieth century. His sixty-year commitment to the vision and practice of anarchism survived both the collapse of the Revolution and Civil War in Spain and The Second World War; he helped fuel the libertarian impetus of the 1960s and 1970s and steer it through the reactionary challenges of the Thatcherite 1980s and post-Cold War 1990s. Fortunately, before he died, Albert managed to finish his autobiography, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels,* a pungent, no-punches pulled, Schvejkian account of a radical twentieth century enemy of humbug and injustice. A life-long trade union activist, he fought Mosley's Blackshirts in the battle of Cable Street, played an active role in supporting the anarchist communes and militias in the Spanish Revolution and the pre-war German anti-Nazi resistance, was a key player in the Cairo Mutiny during The Second World War, helped rebuild the post-war anti-Franco resistance in Spain and the international anarchist movement. His achievements include *Cuddon's Cosmopolitan Review*, an occasional satirical review first published in 1965 and named after Ambrose Cuddon, possibly the first consciously anarchist publisher in the modern sense, the founding of the Anarchist Black Cross, a prisoners' aid and ginger group and the paper which grew out of it — *Black Flag*.

However, perhaps Albert's most enduring legacy is the Kate Sharpley Library, probably the most comprehensive anarchist archive in Britain.

Born in 1920 into a mixed marriage in the London of Orwell's *Down and Out* in which there were few homes for heroes, but many heroes fit only for homes, Albert was soon enrolled into political life as a private in the awkward squad. His decision to go down the road of revolutionary politics came, he claimed, in 1935 at the age of 15 - as a direct result of taking boxing lessons. Boxing was considered a "common" sport, frowned upon by the governors of his Edmonton school and the prospective Labour MP for the area, the virulently anti-boxing Dr Edith Summerskill. Perhaps it was the boxer's legs and footwork he acquired as a youth which gave him his lifelong ability to bear his considerable bulk. It certainly induced a lifetime's habit of shrewd assessment of his own and opponents' respective strengths and weaknesses.

The streetwise, pugilistic but bookish schoolboy attended his first anarchist meeting in 1935 where he first drew attention to himself by contradicting the speaker, Emma Goldman, by his defence of boxing. He soon made friends with the ageing anarchist militants of a previous generation and became a regular and dynamic participant in public meetings.

The anarchist-led resistance to the Franco uprising in Spain in 1936 gave a major boost to the movement in Britain and Albert's activities ranged from organising solidarity appeals, to producing propaganda, working with Captain J R White to organise illegal arms shipments from Hamburg to the CNT in Spain and acting as a contact for the Spanish anarchist intelligence services in Britain.

Albert's early working career ranged from fairground promoter, a theatre-hand and occasional film extra. Albert appeared briefly in Leslie Howard's *Pimpernel Smith*, an anti-Nazi film that did not follow the line of victory but rather of revolution in Europe. The plot called for communist prisoners, but by the time Howard came to make it, in 1940, Stalin had invaded Finland, and the script was changed to anarchist prisoners. Howard decided that none of the actors playing the anarchists seemed real and insisted that real anarchists, including Albert, be used as extras in the concentration camp scenes. One consequence of this meeting was Howard's introduction to Hilda Monte, a prominent but unsung hero of the German anarchist resistance to Hitler, which may have contributed to his subsequent death en route to Lisbon.

Albert's later working years were spent mainly as a second-hand bookseller and, finally, as a Fleet Street copytaker. His last employer was, strangely enough, *The Daily Telegraph*.

While by nature a remarkably gentle, generous and gracious soul, Albert's championship of anarchism as a revolutionary working class movement brought him into direct and sustained conflict with the neo-liberals who came to dominate the movement in the late 1940s. Just as people are drawn to totalitarian movements like fascism and communism because of their implicit violence and ideological certainties, many otherwise politically incompatible people were drawn to anarchism because of its militant tolerance. Albert was vehemently opposed to the re-packaging and marketing of anarchism as a broad church for academia-oriented quietists and single-issue pressure groups. It was ironical that one of this group, the late Professor George Woodcock, should publicly dismiss anarchism as a spent historical force in 1962, blissfully unaware of the post-Butskellite storm which was about to break and the influence anarchist and libertarian ideas would have on this and generations yet to come.

It was his championship of class-struggle anarchism, coupled with his scepticism of the student-led New Left in the 1960s which earned Albert his reputation for sectarianism. Paradoxically, as friend and *Black Flag* cartoonist Phil Ruff points out in his introduction to Albert's autobiography, it was the discovery of class struggle anarchism through the "sectarianism" of *Black Flag* under Albert's editorship that convinced so many anarchists of his and subsequent generations to become active in the movement'. The dynamic and logic of Albert's so-called sectarianism continued to bring countless young people into the anarchist movement then and for a further

OBITUARY

thirty years until his untimely stroke in April 1996.

It is difficult to write a public appreciation of such an inscrutably private man. Albert Meltzer seemed often like a member of a tug-of-war team; you never quite knew if he was there simply to make up numbers or if he was the anchor-man of the whole operation. To Albert, all privilege was the enemy of human freedom; not just the privileges of capitalists, kings, bureaucrats and politicians but also the petty aspirations of opportunists and careerists among the rebels themselves. Much of what he contributed to the lives of those who knew him must go unrecorded, but he will be remembered and talked about fondly for many years to come by those of us whose lives he touched.

Stuart Christie

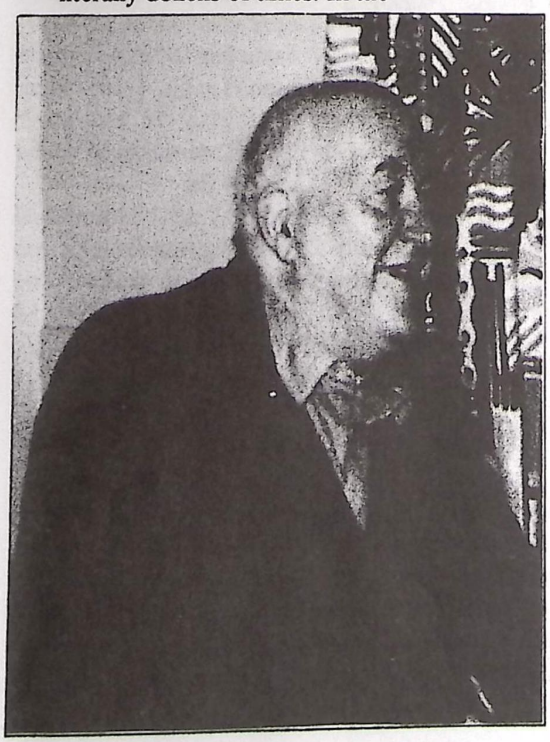
REMEMBERING ALBERT

"I'll be back for May Day in Las Cocheras." That was how Albert Meltzer said goodbye on his last visit to Barcelona. He was returning to London to put the finishing touches to his autobiography "I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels - Sixty Years of Commonplace Life and Anarchist Agitation". He was also going home much pre-occupied by the international situation, what with the rise of fascism and more especially by the frictions within the IWA at a time when more cohesion was what was required.

There was nothing out of the ordinary about his "I'll be back". He had said it literally dozens of times. In the underground days, during the period of transition, Albert always "came back" literally or figuratively, always available and always ready to help out. Hamburg, Paris, Brussels, Madrid or Barcelona's Barrio Chino - it was all the same to him. His comradely heart was as big and as startling as his wits were quick.

Albert's activism started as a 15 year old in London and he very soon came into contact with the Spanish revolution and the CNT-FAI Aid Committees sponsored by Emma Goldman (along with Berneri's daughter Marie Louise, her husband Vernon Richards, the anarcho-syndicalist Tom Brown and novelist Ethel Mannin, all revolving around the newspaper Spain and the World). From then on he had a particular empathy with the Spanish militant anarchist movement that was to endure right up to his death this year. But he was to become alienated from the British group that carried on with War Commentary and Freedom.

Albert, for all the time he was committed to the revolutionary struggle against Franco, was also intensely active in London. He lived through the defeat of revolutionary Spain, the Second World War and the bleak years of squabbling and heated controversies. Underneath the easy-going surface Albert was an incorrigible enthusiast and he made himself enemies with more than one outburst on more than one occasion. Yet he knew the ins and outs of the London and British movement with all its leftist sub-fauna better than anyone. With that special zeal, sometimes dubbed sectarianism, he was able to motivate the younger and more radical elements. It was not all sweetness and light - there was no way he could have painted those golden angels.



The 60s and 70s saw an upsurge in the anti-Franco struggle and of British activism. These were the years of the First of May Group, the launching of Black Flag, the Anarchist Black Cross, the Angry Brigade and, in partnership with Miguel Garcia, of the Centro Ibérico, through which the widest spectrum of exiles passed, and of Cienfuegos Press. Albert was never far away, despite the "generation gap".

Dear old Albert, many a year has passed since those coffee shops in the middle of Soho in the 1950s.. and come what may, London and the British movement are not going to be the same again now that you have left them, never to return.

Solidaridad Obrera, July 1996

For Albert -
remembered as a caring and committed man;
with the greatest appreciation of his life, his energy and courage.

Always missed and never forgotten by anarchists everywhere.

With condolences to his friends and with gratitude to Albert,

MERSEYSIDE @NARCHISTS

COMMEMORATING ALBERT MELTZER

These lines are intended to give our heartfelt tribute to the memory of our compañero Albert Meltzer.

Albert's life, committed from his youth to the struggle in defence of Ideas, was especially marked by his unfailing and direct support for the resistance activity of the CNT against the Francoist dictatorship. This wa demonstrated by his personal involvement, with other British comrades, in the underground struggle against the regime. He risked his own liberty in delicate intelligence missions and in militant organisational liaison inside Spain during the dictatorship, which is yet another reason to attend this meeting in commemoration of Albert Meltzer, whose record embodies the highest measure of human solidarity.

Barcelona May 23
CNT Regional Committee, Catalonia
Barcelona Local Union Federation
Editorial Staff of Solidaridad Obrera
Fundació d'Estudis Llibertaris I Anarcosindicalistes

A sense of Freedom

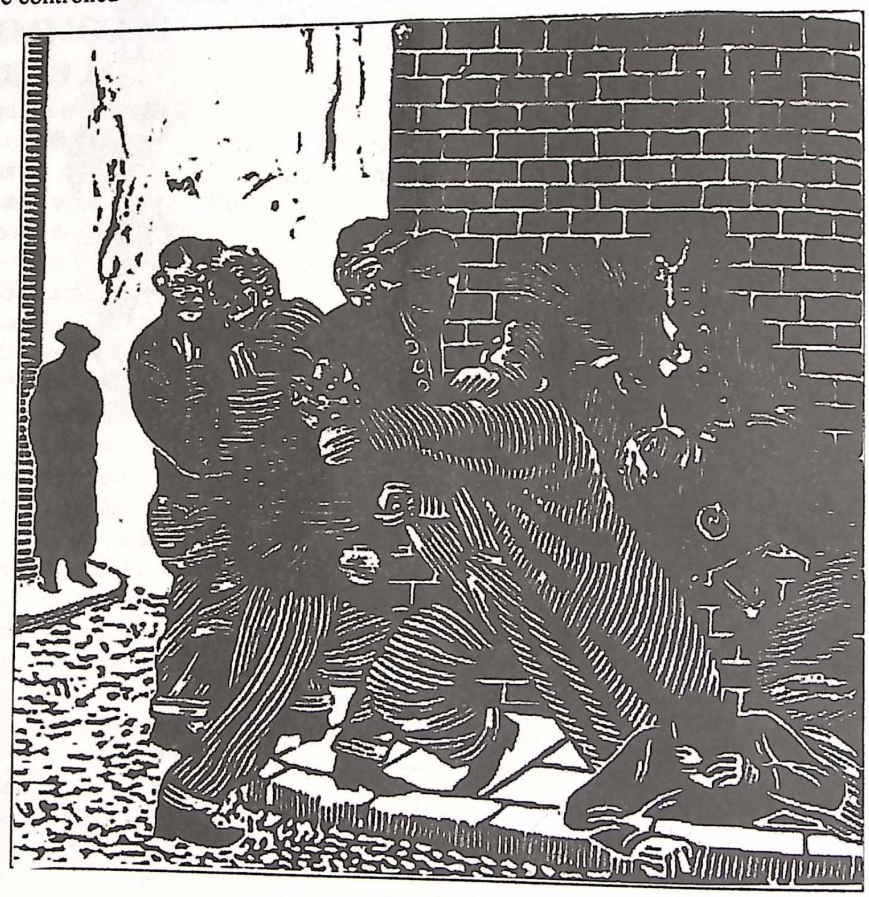
The following was found on Albert Meltzer's computer after his death. Though possibly unfinishe , it can be taken as his parting words to the editors of Freedom.

The proprietor of Freedom is always reluctant to discuss how it is run, how he got and has retained unbroken control for over 50 years, what this status is exactly, how he is planning for it to be controlled after his death and on what basis it claims to an unbroken line of succession since 1886. Or even if he believes in Anarchism. His indignation over my autobiography was always predictable.

The present editors, subject to recall by "the Boss" (as he is called behind his back), did not see how they could avoid reviewing my book, particularly as some unsuspecting readers had sent in flattering reviews. The task was given to Nicolas Walter, anxious to rebut his double dealings described in the book.

Following his exposure in Black Flag regarding his collaboration with the late H Montgomery Hyde, Tory Unionist MP, former Intelligence officer and later writer, Walter wrote, in a private letter to myself, declaring that this was far worse than anything he had ever said about me (true!) and if I denied it (though fully attested) and restrained Black Flag from referring to the matter again (beyond my remit anyway) he would apologise for all the lies he told about me in Freedom and elsewhere. I would not agree and the lies continue (I do not know how many as I gave up reading it). Unlike the Nazi C18, who received an invitation to explain themselves after they torched the premises, I, it seemed, had no "right to reply" to the lies in that journal, formerly the property of the movement. (Unless, perhaps, I put on a swastika and burned the place down).

The ageist sneer "Uncle" is rich coming from a journal whose principals are ten years older than myself, who have been dribbling in their bibs for decades, and written by someone slowly dying in a wheelchair. Alternatively, it might just refer to the pathetic attempts at fantasy satire written by Labour Party/Freedom Press/Winchester School parasite Arthur Moyse some 20 years ago, thus suggesting that his dreamed up characters with names of his acquaintances had some basis in fact, in lieu of anything worse he could dig up.



I pass over the alleged factual inaccuracies as Nicolas Ridicolas does not dare say what they were but promised to reveal them in secret etc. to select readers. The "false and furious" attacks are presumably on himself. Though he dares use the term "evasive", the real objection is that I have revealed too much that Richards and Walter want kept secret.

Usually the allegation is that I have a personal vendetta against FP or some of its bosses. This is to obscure the fact of the real political differences which all real anarchists hold. "Emotional instability" is a new twist in the paper war against me. It was last alleged against one of its voluntary contributors (suspended but since permitted to resume) for daring to suggest they give practical help to squatters.

The curious remark about the attacks on "anyone and anything to do with Freedom Press" suggests that anyone other than the few living off it are nothing. Long term neglect and even founders are rescued from deliberate neglect and even shameful treatment by the new "officials". Are George Cores, Tom Brown, Leah Feldman, Ambrose Barker, Kitty Lamb, Guy Aldred, Frank Leech, Matt Kavanagh, Hilda Green, nobodies ? They sustained it giving more than any of the paid people. Instead, Freedom have preferred to boost people like Karl Walter, the fascist granddad of Nicolas, passing him off as an anarchist.

Those rescued in the book from oblivion and in some cases calumny by the approved writers of Freedom Press history, are nobody and nothing, however many years they supported it and in some cases founded. What a contempt for the readership from people who, pressed, admit they do not believe in Anarchism.

So, lies, malice, falsehood, calumny, instability and inconsistency give a "convincing impression of a certain type of anarchist personality", do they ? If they think that, why do they produce an allegedly anarchist paper ? The answer: they ponce off the ideology for direct financial or indirect careerist motives.

No Truck With Marxism

The following article is the first article Albert Meltzer had published. It appeared in 1938 in CONTROVERSY, a magazine put out by the "left opposition" in the Independent Labour Party. Albert was replying to an article by Frank Ridley calling for revolutionary unity between anarchists and marxists. It is printed here not to show how far we have moved on politically though it does seem disturbingly apt for the current situation of the modern British Left.

A Marxist today, if he is sincere, can accept none or very few of the best known brands of Marxist Socialism. Ridley's article points out another way out for him - alliance with Anarchism, an amalgamation of working class socialism. But the Marxist is wrong again.

Ridley has forgotten none of the differences between Marx and Bakunin personally, and learnt nothing of their differences politically. Marx taught and Bakunin pioneered two widely clashing theories. Ridley is doing what the authors-on-Spain do (the fortnightly type) study what current events have to say and draw the conclusions held before.

His formula would appeal to Marxists. Marxists want political action to get a utopia (Ridley calls it "anarchism"). The anarchists want this to start with. Therefore combine the two. Simple. But why not leave Marxism as it was before? Can any one see the difference (except that the anarchists would then be Marxists) ?

The Marxist must learn a better trick than that- it isn't even as skilful as the Trotskyist pretence that the "hue and cry over Kronstadt" followed the Spanish Revolution(Berkman apparently wrote the history of the Kronstadt Rebellion after his death, according to that) thus evading discussion of the Thermidorian rod to which Marxism Bolshevism has led.

Ridley must know that it is absurd to point out that Marxists want political action to achieve their "utopia" and "omit to say" what the anarchists propose to achieve theirs, thus leaving the inference that they have no particular programme.

Actually, they propose industrial action - anarchosyndicalism , direct control by revolutionary industrial unions - that is, by the workers themselves - after the revolution and by direct economic action by the same organisations before the revolution.

It will be argued that some political action is necessary. If so, and I fail to see that it is so, it is a solution that can always be taken at will. I fail to see that it warrants anarchism becoming Marxism, or revolutionary syndicalism becoming national-syndicalism, to which the acceptance of the State would lead. The whole point of revolutionary syndicalism is the rendering unnecessary of the State of the State, and that there is no suggestion that it is pure "Bakuninist" Anarchism.

The fact, however, that governments come and go, but capitalism remains, is, from a Marxist point of view alone, proof that the economic side of society is far more important than the political side. The latter can be adopted and discarded at will; the former must always be dominant.

The Marxist may or may not believe that. But what alternative is there to revolutionary work on the industrial field?

Does anyone believe at this stage in pure "barricades" - even in slightly-adulterated "parliamentary propaganda and barricades" ? Even if they do, propagandist-parliamentarism is not far from careerist-parliamentarism, as witness the I.L.P. These "great revolutionaries" go to parliament to undermine it, and it undermines them. The I.L.P. has been doomed to be the jumping -off board for careerist social-democracy.

Maybe Ridley still believes in S.P.G.B.ism, that is in pure political action. Does he suggest this is proved by the Spanish experience ? Dialectic or no dialectic, the war would have come, and with the war the revolution, even if the Cortes were packed with Spanish S.P.G.B.ers, a most unlikely occurrence. And what could it have done, any more than the reformists did ?- nothing. The intervention of the syndicalist workers into the direction of the struggle and of industry, alone saved Spain.

What is left of Marxism? Stalinism is Fascism plus. The innumerable communist oppositions apologise for Moscow - Fascism and thus prove they are not Marxists but economic Stalinists. How much neo-Leninist literature heeds the Marxian advice that there is something more to revolutionary socialism than denouncing Mr Citizen So-and-So for betraying the workers ?

Already the much-boosted Fourth International has been castrated by politics: on the Spanish question, Morrow-Trotsky whine: "We offered the P.O.U.M. that rarest and most precious of gifts -a clear Marxist analysis"- and were hurt when the P.O.U.M. declined, just as the League for the Rights of Paris were hurt when they offered to help the commune, and were invited to get guns.

Maybe now the I.L.P. is thinking of rejoining the Labour Party- the dog to go back to his vomit-a new party would be indicated. Maybe the "Anarcho-Marxist Alliance" would do it, maybe another: at all events it would be the party until...

After all, Marx was right when he said the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves. It is only the Marxists who are wrong.

Marx was wrong in pioneering political socialism and ascribing it to a "dialectic". Party politics arose out of the monarchist-parliamentary controversy, and were continued by capitalism to suit its own purpose. To make a political, and not a social, revolution, political action will suffice, but the day of political revolutions is over: the social revolution and the self emancipation of the masses will be achieved through industrial action- that is with their own hands-which is anarchism.

THE RESPONSE of Anarchists/anti authoritarians in Britain to the war in Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia has been passivity and apathy, well meaning solidarity, and rigorous though ultimately pointless intellectualising. Otherwise sensible comrades looked desperately for "good guys" and an International Brigade (not very anarchist) to support, hoping that it was somehow a modern Spanish revolution. For fascist groups or religious nutters there was ample opportunity to kill foreigners or unbelievers. For the anarchist movement it was less easy to show real solidarity. Writing well thought out analyses seem a lot easier than working out practical forms of action. Our own fights here, with our own state went on but for a lot of people this was not immediate enough.

The following are three articles relevant to an anarchist approach to the former Yugoslavia. The first is a letter from Anarchist/Anti-fascist Aid to Bosnia. The second is from a comrade in Croatia, concerning the situation for people who did not fit in the Great Power carve up of the former Yugoslavia . The last was sent from an anarchist/anti-authoritarian group in Serbia and is a reminder of an anarchist tradition in Serbia still relevant today.

NEVER AGAIN

If anyone reading this was wondering what ever happened to Anti-Fascist Aid to Bosnia ...Well the two of us who formed the idea of the UK anarchist and anti-fascist movement giving some solidarity to people from the mining town of Tuzla came up against a huge barrage of criticism, mainly from the academics and just general hostility.

We attempted to appeal for donations of either money or equipment needed, and to raise general awareness of the ethnic cleansing that was happening in Europe, complete with concentration/ rape camps and the plight that multicultural towns were facing.

Less than twenty people contacted us with genuine interest, Birmingham Class War made a brilliant effort in giving solidarity and what they obtained went over to Tuzla with one of last year's Workers' Aid convoys. We also received letters from international anarchists trying to do exactly the same as us and also finding it difficult because of the "who cares" attitude. Some anarchists were even repeating arguments the SWP were giving as to why they didn't want to give solidarity.

We never stated that the Bosnian Army had not been involved in committing atrocities in the past, in fact which countries have never been involved in such genocide, colonisation, oppression....? We did not give the impression that all Serbs were involved in the ethnic cleansing either; we had contact from Serbian people who were continually demonstrating against the indiscriminate killings by the army.

We would like to mention how embarrassed we feel for naively thinking we would receive solidarity to those that needed it in desperate times and to disassociate ourselves with such movements that harp on about Nazis - NEVER AGAIN ?

Even C18 gave more solidarity - to the Serbian army by helping them ethnically cleanse during the war.

DEAD END ROAD: THE KUPLJENSKO REFUGEES

Since last summer refugees from north-western Bosnia have been trapped in a refugee camp in Croatia. In fact it is more like a prison camp than a refugee centre. The boundaries of their lives are defined by how far they can go along the road without being shot or arrested, beaten and forcibly repatriated to Bosnia. The Croatian Special Police have blockaded the camp to control everyone and everything that comes in.

The camp itself is a confused collection of tents and makeshift shelters strung out along a five mile stretch of road just south of Vojnic. Between 7,000 and 9,000 people are living there. Everything brought into the camp by the aid organisations has to have permission from the Croatian authorities. The refugees manage to get things like cigarettes and coffee by smuggling in dangerous night operations. On January 6th 1996 a young man was shot dead trying to bring in "contraband" material. No-one in the camp is allowed to have visits from family or friends. Mail is censored for political content by the Red Cross. So, who are these people and why are they in Kupjlensko ?

In August 1995 about 20,000 people fled the triumphant forces of the Bosnian government's 5th corps who were recapturing the Bihac pocket, the "autonomous Republic of Western Bosnia" (formed by Fikret Abdic, after he had fallen out with the Bosnian government. Abdic was variously described as gangster, racketeer, traitor and warlord. Much the same in fact as any of the leaders of the states, self proclaimed or otherwise, of former Yugoslavia or anywhere else). Through 1992/3 Bihac had avoided the worst of the war but in 1994 the Bosnian 5th corps attacked Abdic's army and another bitter phase of the war began. Each man in the area was forced to decide which side to join, the choice being a practical one depending on whose army each man felt he had a better chance of surviving in. During the Serbian offensives of early 1995 the "autonomous" forces fought alongside Croatian and Bosnian Serbs. The collapse of the Croatian Serb region of the Krajina sealed their fate and they fled to seek the protection of the newly re-established Croatian authorities.

In the six months that the refugees have been in Kupjlensko camp they have been subjected to tremendous pressure to return to their former homes. Croatia does not want them and no other country will accept them. The Bosnian government, needing to be seen as responsible and a respecter of human rights have set up a Tri-Partite police force with Croatia and Turkey to ensure the security of the returnees. At the same time conditions at the camp worsen and men are shot smuggling cigarettes or gathering firewood. A seven year old girl was knocked down and killed by a Croatian police van. Many people have already been forced against their will back to Bosnia.

Now there is a growing sense of solidarity in the camp. Since January there have been cultural events and they begin to identify themselves as Kupjlensko refugees not "Abdic followers". International forces want them to return to Bosnia but who has the right to insist that they return when they fear violence and discrimination. Amongst those who have returned there have been threats, intimidation, arrests, beatings and at least one murder. Stuck in a horrible camp, no country willing to provide refuge and no safety for them if they return home the Kupljensko people simply exist on a dead end road.

KRISTA CICVARIC: ANARCHISM BEFORE WWI

This is taken from an article we received from *Torpedo* comrades in Smederevo in Serbia. The two things I think are important are the reassertion that there was an anarchist movement in pre-communist Serbia and that it already recognised real problems of revolutionary organisation and action.

Krsta Cicvaric was one of the most prolific Anarchist writers of pre-first world war Serbia. He had come into contact with anarchism through foreign militants escaping arrest or persecution and was prevented from joining the Social Democratic Party because of his anarchist orientation. Why he tried to join is not explained but he described the SDP as an ordinary bourgeois party, only socialist in name which "fights for power in the town hall and the state like any other bourgeois party". It was a centralised organisation with the "aim of bringing into the soul of the proletariat greater legalism and respect for bourgeois laws".

The union was seen as the organisational form of the workers and the anarchists said that the first task was to free itself from the influence of the SDP. Cicvaric wanted a single league based on a simple federal basis, free from political parties and using direct action and direct confrontation with the bourgeoisie.

The general strike was not just a refusal t work but the forceful interruption of production. Police terror should be answered with workers terror and the strike ceases to be "legal" and takes on a revolutionary character. However Cicvaric rejected armed struggle and open warfare. He realised the problem posed by the army but saying that the majority of soldiers are proletarian he favoured organising inside the army for the withdrawal of military obedience. His anti-militarism meant workers going into the army to organise revolutionary action there: "If we want to carry out revolution in the street we must perpetrate revolution in the barracks" .

CZECH ANTIFASCIST ARRESTED FOR A MURDER

ON THE 20th of March a young antifascist Pavel Kroupa went with his brother by bus from Prague to Mlada Boleslav. There were also 5 nazis on the bus. First of all he was verbally attacked, but at the endthey stood outside of the bus one with knife, another with a knuckleduster. There was a fight during which Pavel killed one of the Nazis. He is in a prison now, arrested for murder. Every support for hime is needed. We hope he will be released, because there was a similar case in the past, when a famous sculptor, Pavel Opocensky, killed a nazi skinhead, but it took years to prove that it was self-defense.

Pavels prison address:
P. Kroupa 4.3.1977 veznice vazba straz pod ralskem 471 27 Czech Republic

Support:
Ivana Vranova Bohunicka 19 600 00 Brno Czech Republic

SERBIAN WORKERS STRIKE FOR HIGHERWAGES

ON MAY 28th about 1000 workers gathered outside the pro-government Independent Trade Union to protest against low pay and unpaid wages . There has been a strike wave in Serbia this spring as workers have not seen any benefits from the lifting of UN sanctions.

The minimum wage for healthworkers, who were among those striking, was 160 dinars per month. Official statistics calculate a family of four needs a minimum of 1300 dinars a month. Workers from the courts and tractor factories have also taken action.

POKED FULL OF BULLET HOLES

JOSE BERGES, better known as doctor death, was shot on April 5th in Argentina by the Organisation Revolucionaria del Pueblo. Berges had 20 bullet holes but was still alive. Two hospitals refused to assist the wounded man. Berges, the "Argentinian Mengele", a torturer during the military dictatorship, was in charge of setting the pace of the torture sessions to make them more painful. He would steal children born to women prisoners in concentration camps and give them to military personnel. The mothers were murdered. The total was 500 children. Berges was sentenced in 1986 to six years for torture and child stealing. He was released in 1987.

STATEMENT TO THE PRESS FROM SWEDISH ANTIFA

ON THE NIGHT of the 24th and the 25th of March 1996 a shop on Tomtebogatan 44 [in Stockholm] was attacked. The windows and the protective glass inside were broken by stones an sledgehammers and teargas and butyric acid was then thrown inside. The shop intends to sell Nazi propaganda and also serves as a meeting place for Nazi groups such as SUNS (Stockholms Unga National Socialister, Young National Socialists in Stockholm) and Nationella Alliansen (The National Alliance). We refuse to tolerate the fact that fascist groupings are allowed to spread their shit and work unhindered in our city.

We have decided to use these methods as it is impossible to fight fascism with silence. It has also proven to be insufficient to oppose it only ideologically. A physical resistance is necessary. It is important to stop fascist groupings from establishing permanent places to run their activities from.

The shop premises are owned by the tenant-owners' society Kadetten 22. They are by now well aware of who they rented the shop to. By letting a shop to fascists you become partly responsible for the growth of the fascist movement.

This is something we don't accept!

Kadetten 22 can now choose to continue to rent their shop to fascists, but will then have to face the consequences. They also have the choice to take a stand against fascism and evict the ones renting the space. We will not cease damaging the shop until the fascists are gone.

To the Nazis we say: View this as a minor warning!

To Kadetten 22 we say: Choose sides! Evict the Nazi swines!

To all fighting antifascists we say: The struggle continues!

Merseyside Dockers Update

June 1996

On the 7th June 96 a mass meeting of over 400 Mersey Dockers voted to reject a new "final" offer by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC). There was only one vote in favour of the deal. The latest offer was delivered via ACAS in writing and was significantly worse than an earlier verbal offer.

The company are refusing to accept the result of the vote and are insisting that the offer be put to a secret ballot, threatening that if arrangements were not in hand for this by June 18th the offer would be withdrawn.

Under the deal all 329 previous employees of MDHC would be re-employed (not reinstated) on a fixed term 4 week contract. During the four weeks the dockers would not work but would be paid £1000 and required to indicate whether they wished to continue working for the company or accept severance pay. Those accepting severance pay would receive £25,000; those wishing to continue working would have to fight over 60 jobs (and a possible further 40 jobs if scabs in some areas were willing to accept severance pay). The original verbal offer had promised 120 jobs. The company reserved the right to decide the "suitability" if those applying for re-employment. All those not accepting severance or re-employment would be made redundant.

The deal covered only the previous employees of MDHC and there was nothing for the 130 men formerly employed by other companies.

It was seen as significant by the dockers that the company had faxed a copy of the offer to John Bowers, president of the International Longshoremens' Union on the US East coast. The company is still coming under considerable pressure from solidarity action from dockers worldwide, in particular that against its biggest customer ACL.

Solidarity Action

In Merseyside, for the last two weeks, seven out of the eight tugboat crews have refused to cross the 150 strong picket line of the Liverpool Dockers and the Women of the Waterfront. This has caused considerable disruption to the port as ships have been attempting to come in without tugboat assistance in contravention of insurance conditions. ACL line ships have been amongst these and it is believed that they are now in deep trouble with their insurance company.

On Saturday 8th June two ships attempting to port without tugboat assistance had to drop anchor due to difficulties, blocking the shipping lane for 12 hours. As a result Canmar line ships have decided not to work without tugboats and are experiencing long delays whilst waiting for the one crew that is prepared to cross the picket line.

International Solidarity

In Sweden, Stockholm Dockers at the port of Gothenbug had been implementing a "mild" boycott of ACL ships. The loading / unloading of ACL ships was being delayed for 12 hours after arrival. At least one ACL ship arrives in the port every week and the company's time schedule was put under considerable pressure. Swedish dockers have now given notice that they intend to implement a total boycott of ACL ships and in Stockholm, most members of the union are contributing an hour's salary each week to the Merseyside dockers.

In contrast to the media blackout in Britain, the Swedish second largest daily newspaper published a two page article on the Merseyside strike, placed next to the sports pages, in order to reach as many working class readers as possible. "Sports and jobs are just the same" claimed dockers Ronnie Bibby and Peter Atkinson, "only by sticking together is it possible to win fights like this."

In Italy dockers in Salerno have agreed to an overtime ban on ships to and from Liverpool and have begun monthly collections of 10,000 lira per man to support the strike. This solidarity action was in response to a request from a delegation of Merseyside dockers who attended a conference against privatisation in the port of Genoa and then were put in touch with workers in Salerno.

About 10% of foodstuffs arriving at Liverpool come via Salerno using Zimlin and Gracechurch shipping lines, so the delegation were keen to talk to the workers there. They received tremendous hospitality from the United Portworkers Co-op and were given the opportunity to address a mass meeting of the dockworkers before they started work. The history of the dispute was outlined and the case for solidarity was made; after questions from the floor the decision to implement the overtime ban and to do collections was made unanimously. Both Genoa and Salerno dockers agreed to send delegatest o the next Liverpool dockers intenational conference.

For more information, including contact numbers of local Dockers Support Groups, contact the Liverpool Dockers on 0151 207 3388

Mumia Abu-Jamal Update

American Embassy Occupied in Denmark

On Wednesday 15th May, the American Embassy in Copenhagen was occupied by militant activists from the Danish "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Campaign". Five activists climbed onto the front roof of the embassy with a banner proclaiming "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal". The American flag was burned and leaflets thrown to the streets below, the activists chanting "Free Mumia, Yankees go home and No justice - no peace". At the same time comrades from the campaign distributed leaflets around the city.
The Danish guards and US marines ordered the protesters to get down, but on their refusal, raised the alarm and around sixty police armed with machine guns surrounded the area. After about half an hour on the roof the activists were arrested and taken to the police station where they were held for 7-8 hours and then released without charge. It seems that the ambassador was reluctant to press charges as the resulting publicity would have exposed the extremely lax security at the embassy.

The action was a success and was covered extensively in the Danish press as well as on CNN. The day after the action there was a Rage Against the Machine gig where activists from the campaign made a well received speech to the audience. Public awareness of Mumia's struggle has been raised significantly by the action and the Danish campaign are continuing to fight for the release of political prisoners everywhere.

Source: "Free Mumia Abu - Jamal Kampagnen"
c/o Kafa-X, Blagardsgade 12, 2200 Copenhagen N, Denmark

Mumia Abu-Jamal denied the right to give interviews and mail intercepted June 1996

Mumia has written a book entitled "Live from Death Row" whilst awaiting execution on death row in Pittsburgh. On broadcasting his intention to publish the book, prison officials barred him from talking to reporters and began to intercept, open and photocopy private mail sent to him from his lawyers. Legal documents addressed to Mumia were passed on to state officials outside the Department of Corrections, and Mumia was denied access to a paralegal who had been visiting him socially.
Mumia sought an order prohibiting officials from opening his mail and from blocking further interviews. Magistrate Kenneth J Benson has issued a 66 page report which heavily criticises the prison officials' actions (in particular the passing on of legal documents to people outside the Department of Corrections) and recommends an order prohibiting officials from opening the prisoner's mail outside his presence unless they can show they have reason to expect to find evidence of a crime or violation of prison rules. Citing Mumia's constitutional right to free speech, Benson also criticised officials for barring him from talking to reporters. However he ruled that officials were justified in denying him access to the paralegal and that they had a right to ensure that Mumia didn't operate a business from prison, which would be a violation of prison rules. They had defended their actions on the grounds that the publication of the book could constitute conducting a publishing business from prison!
Both Mumia and prison officials have 10 days to file objections to the report. US District Judge Donetta Ambrose will then issue a ruling based on the report.

The Free Mumia Campaign can be contacted in Philadelphia on 001 215 476 8812

MacArson

Dimos Hristofidis, an anarchist was arrested early in the morning on 15th February accused of attempted arson of the Macdonalds in Syntagma Square, Athens. This was part of a series of attempts by the cops to frame him on arson charges. At the end of February anarchists on an otherwise tedious leftist anti-fascist demonstration in Piraeus included Macdonalds in a broad selection of targets for destruction. There is little or no animal liberation movement in Greece but hostility to Macdonalds is natural enough anywhere.

ANARCHISTS RAIDED IN QUEBEC

News has just reached us of a number of anarchists arrested in Québec City following riots. It appears that the police were originally looking for right wingers, but then a group called the World Anti Nazi League (?) blamed the anarchists, and the Démanarchie collective in that city was raided and a number arrested. We don't have any more details at present, but urgent messages of support should be sent to our Canadian comrades at:
Démanarchie, CP 301 Haute-ville, Québec QC G1R 4P8

PERTH PRISONERS STRIKE

More than 50 prisoners at Perth Prison in Scotland went on a work strike on Monday 10th June in protest over what they call "deterioration in access to visits". There are not enough places for families and friends to visit, and that despite promises and official Scottish Prison Service policy, nothing had been done. They demanded that at least another two visiting places be provided, especially at weekends, to relieve frustration and anger over the overcrowding.

The statement put out by the prisoners announced that they were withdrawing their labour in a "peacefula dn disciplined protest." The strike was solid on the Monday, on the Tuesday the cons were locked down and one of the prisoners involved was ghosted out of the prison. The men intended to resume the strike on Wednesday to protest this, but we don't know yet how this went.

John Bowden, a longtime prison organiser and rebel who was involved in the strike was ghosted out on the Thursday to Shotts Prison and has subsequently been moved to Durham. John had previously been threatened with being returned to the English prison system, from where he escaped in 1992 and where many regimes and screws have it in for him. This year he was told by the Scottish Prison Service that if he was well behaved for 12 months he would not be sent back. We're proud to say he couldn't keep out of trouble. He says of Perth "I sense that things here are moving towards serious and sustained confrontation". Like everywhere else! More info and letters of solidarity to John Bowden, 1273/94 HMPDurham, Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HU

Dave Callender

On Sunday 16th October 1994 a combined police operation arrested Greg Avery and Dave Callender. The two had been under surveillance but one of the cops gave himself away and they were subsequently arrested. The police speculated that arson was the intent of the two animal rights campaigners, despite no evidence, nor any damage being caused.

The pair spent 16 months on remand in Winson Green they were finally charged. Neither denied there was a conspiracy, but it was to leave hoax devices at animal abuse centres, which would close them down temporarily and generate publicity. But the CPS were intent on conspiracy to cause criminal damage, and so it came to trial.

The trial saw Greg Avery acquitted and two days of laborious deliberations to bring a majority verdict on Dave Callender, who was sentenced to 10 years. All the prosecution had to rely on was intent, but even their forensic witness Sean Doyle conceded the devices could only have been dummies. A number of other activists gave evidence in support of Dave and Greg, even though they could have put their own liberty at risk by doing so. Halfway through the trial the Judge instructed the jury to disregard three expert, credible witnesses for Dave's defence, though he allowed them for Greg's, one reason they acquitted him. This outrageous ruling by an inexperienced judge will be the basis of Dave's appeal and request for a retrial. For more info contact the Dave Callender Justice Campaign, PO Box 38, Manchester M60 1NX

PABLO SERRANO

Spanish anarchist prisoner Pablo Serrano was recently granted limited home leave. Pablo was originally sentenced in 1984 and has been involved in prison struggles since 1986. In 1989 he was offered conditional release provided he swore obedience to the state and renounced armed struggle. Naturally he refused. In March he had a three day furlough, though it should have been 6 days. He should soon be placed into the third grade so that he only has to go to prison to sleep.

ERIC ALLISON SENT DOWN

Eric Allison , co-author of the book "Strangeways: A Serious Disturbance", about the Strangeways Prison Revolt of 1990, has been found guilty of conspiring to defraud Barclays Bank of several millions of pounds. Eric, who, as a professional criminal saw the inside of Strangeways and many other jails in the past, supported the Strangeways protesters on the roof from outside the prison, and since then has been centrally active in helping the men convicted of organising and being involved in the riots, and publicising and protesting the events (and other prison resistance). The brilliant book written with Nicki Jameson on Strangeways, exposed not only the battles of 1990 but the jail's infamous past, which Eric could write about from personal experience.

There seems little doubt that whether Eric ripped off poor old Barclays or not, he has been a thorn in the side of the Prison Service and they will be happy to see him jailed again. Ironically he is now back in the rebuilt Strangeways Prison itself, waiting to be sentenced. It is important that this man who has done so much for prisoners who fought the system should be supported in his turn.

Letters and cards of support to: Eric Allison, HMP Strangeways, Southall St, Manchester M60 9AH

The book "Strangeways: A Serious Disturbance" is available for £6.50 plus 50p P/P from London ABC, 121 Railton Road London SE24.

PROTEST IN ROCHESTER PRISON

On Friday 17th May riot police broke up a peaceful protest by 69 asylum seekers on D Wing in Rochester Prison, which at any one time holds on average 150 asylum seekers being detained while the Home Office looks into their claims to stay in this country. On the day before notices were put up on D Wing that all detainees would be locked in their cells for 24 hours on Saturday on Sunday. At 8.30pm on the Thursday evening, the asylum seekers refused to go back into their cells. They sat peacefully outside, not threatening any screws. At about 1am the authorities asked them again to go back to their cells, they refused and half an hour later riot police stormed D Wing, smashed furniture and forcibly put all the detainees into their cells. Some detainees offered passive resistance, rolling themselves into balls. Ten of them barricaded themselves into a cell. Many received minor injuries. This is all the information we have, apart from the fact that when the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns rang the jail to ask for information they were told that the governor had "gone on holiday". Apparently his holidays often coincide with trouble at the jail. Suspicious, we'd say.

Source: London ABC

Down To The Wire

The life and ongoing struggles of John Perotti, prison activist and jailhouse lawyer is still available from the John Perotti Defence Fund, c/o 45A Bedford Ave, Aberdeen AB2 3YL price £3.
All the cash goes straight to helping John's legal costs.

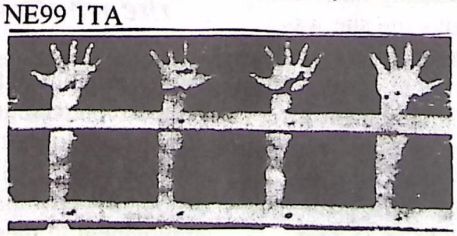
At the moment, John is working on campaigns to fight the building of a new Super Maximum Control Unit prison in Ohio and writing. He has brought over 150 cases on his own and others' behalf, as well as helping others with legal work.

DIRTY PROTEST AT FRANKLAND

Prisoners in the Segregation Unit of Durham's Frankland Prison went on a dirty protest on May 24th, which lasted into June. Framed prisoner Ray Gilbert, together with Tony Bush and Barry Morton (both convicted for being involved in the 1990 Stangeways Uprising), as well as other inmates, started the protest (which in case you didn't know means smearing your shit on the wall of your cell), over various grievances, including demands that they be moved nearer their families, that they had been put in the Seg Unit unjustly (over an assault in fact committed by screws), for medical treatment and to stop interference with mail. The prisoners involved are all generally subject to continual harassment for the fact that they are protesting their innocence or marked down as troublemakers. The protesters were supported on the outside by Newcastle Anarchist Black Cross, who picketed the prison and leafleted shoppers in Durham town centre and received a positive response.
Some people who were given leaflets wrote to the prisoners and one bloke has arranged to go in to see Ray after reading about his case. While news is sketchy about the current state of affairs, it seems Barry and Ray are now off the protest, having won some of their demands, but as far as we know Tony Bush is still protesting. Barry and Ray may well be moved soon, but it would be a boost to them generally if they received letters and cards of support.

Ray Gilbert H10111
Tony Bush, CD0405
Barry Morton, CV0221
all at HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham DH1 5YD

For more info on the protest and on Ray Gilbert's fight against his conviction from Newcastle ABC, PO Box 1TA, Newcastle, NE99 1TA



FAREWELL ALBERT

The piece below is edited from Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin's personal tribute to Albert Meltzer. As well as being moving in itself, we think it gives an insight into the importance of supporting prisoners and the successes that can bring.

Albert Meltzer is a large part of the reason I am walking around on this side of the prison wall. He worked tirelessly through the Anarchist Black Cross during the 1970s on my behalf and other US political prisoners/ POWs.I was released in 1983 after 15 years on two "life" sentences. He sent articles on my case all over the world yet I had never met him until October 1994, and though in poor health, he never stopped fighting the state, its prisons, its cops and for a new world generally. It was a pleasure to be in his company.
Albert fought all his life for the rights of the poor and for worker's rights. He was opposed to fascist dictatorships all his life struggling against them from the 30s through the 60s until the end of his life. He was an anti-racist and would not condone racist attacks and prejudice because of a person's race or skin colour. In fact, the last fond memory I have of him is him coming with me to the offices of the Independent Black Panther Movement (UK) and literally charming them no end. They loved him! What a sweet man. When we look up the word revolutionary in the dictionary there should be a picture of Albert Meltzer, who gave his life over to the struggle.
I loved him, he was my friend, always there for me. He was a great man, but he was never one to put himself above anyone else, always feeling that what he had done, so could anyone. You enriched my life Albert and helped mightily pull me out of the deepest pit where my/our enemies had hurled me. I will always love and respect you for that, and will see that everyone I work with knows of you and your works. They can bury your body but never your spirit.

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin
Black Autonomy International, Atlanta, US

The Land is Theirs

Hailed as the next big thing since Newbury, 'The Land is Ours' provoked surprisingly little police interest. In fact the police had to be called and told that a bit of land had been taken. On arrival the two officers seem satisfied that this seemed to be a civil matter and walked off. Considering that we could have occupied anywhere - a minister's garden perhaps? - and that the police had shown interest at earlier, maybe they were quite satisfied that we had enough cops of own to prevent any naughty ideas. (This is not to say that a confrontation with the cops is necessarily what makes a campaign politically challenging.)

We were about 300 people at the meeting place in Hammersmith. The first 100 piled into the coach and went on their way to secure the location before the next 100 could join them. This was all jolly fun. After learning the location, the writer jumped in a van and went off to see. About half way there we were followed by two police vans who later turned around and drove off! The site had a large wooden fence around it with a strong metal gate which had been painstakingly hack-sawed through the previous day. The location itself was a derelict piece of riverside land opposite a housing estate in Wandsworth. It was probably the only piece of green land the children from the estate could see from home... [cue violins!] It was also nesting ground for ducks and it seems we were about to trash it. In fact the whole action had the appearance of being fundamentally ecologically unsound. It seemed that little thought had gone into taking the existing inhabitants (i.e. plants, animals and insects) into account - the site was divided up on the basis of suitability for construction projects.

The task of turning it into an alter native scout camp was well under way.With all the necessary middle class concern we had our own health and safety officer to make sure we were all doing it properly. An extremely tall scaffold tower was put up on site for conversion into a house. This fearsome construction, which reached a staggering height of 15 foot, could potentially harm all those involved, and so we all had to wear hard hats! We were also shepherded over to the other side of the field so as not to up set the neighbours, because our talking could supposedly be heard over the fuck-off big road next to us. After complaints about being ordered to plant the potatoes the right way up, there were inevitably a few disillusioned activists fed up Oxbridge graduates.

Why did we resent this campaign so much? Is it because George Monbiot sounds too much like Prince Charles? Unlike last year's Land Is Ours event, this year we did actually go to the place that we planned to go and we were to stay longer than last year. George attempted to do the decent thing and step down from his usual media pulpit. However the five who volunteered to take over were shoved aside by the media vultures who went straight to George, and yet again the reports acted as a launch pad for broadcasting George's personal socio-political interpretations.

So what did the locals think of it all? A good point of the campaign was that attention was given to going out and leafleting the local estates. It seems that most were pleased with what we were doing except for the usual couple of nutters who get wound up about anything. It was unfortunate that the initiative to regenerate this land came from an abstract group and not from the locals. There was little we could do about this. Perhaps the kids from the estate were dying to get on the land but couldn't. Maybe we unlocked a desire that had been in the minds of most of the locals who didn't want a supermarket there and wanted it for themselves. As with any permanent project that is to be successful it needs the full participation of local people as opposed to remaining securely in the grip of lifestylists, theorists and specialists. Increasingly as the week progressed, more locals showed an interest and were getting involved.

So what were the aims of this campaign? According to its leaflets, they were to house the homeless, i.e. make affordable housing, and to boost employment, i.e. create jobs. Both of these aims were to 'bring the community together'. To follow on from these points, there are already enough empty homes in London for all the city's homeless. However sustainable these new houses are, we don't need to be building them on London's few remaining green spaces. The campaign's claim is that we need concentrated, centralised cities in order to prevent destructive urban sprawl. But people who actually live in cities need green spaces for their well-being. Shouldn't we try to make empty houses sustainable? There *are* approximately 860,000 of them in the country after all. There is an obvious contradiction in building sustainable communities - which should not include work for the capitalist system and yet advocating "full employment". The term "employment" is riddled with capitalist assumptions. Surely advocating employment in these terms only serves to perpetuate alienated social relations - the antithesis of the authentic community that we all seek to build.

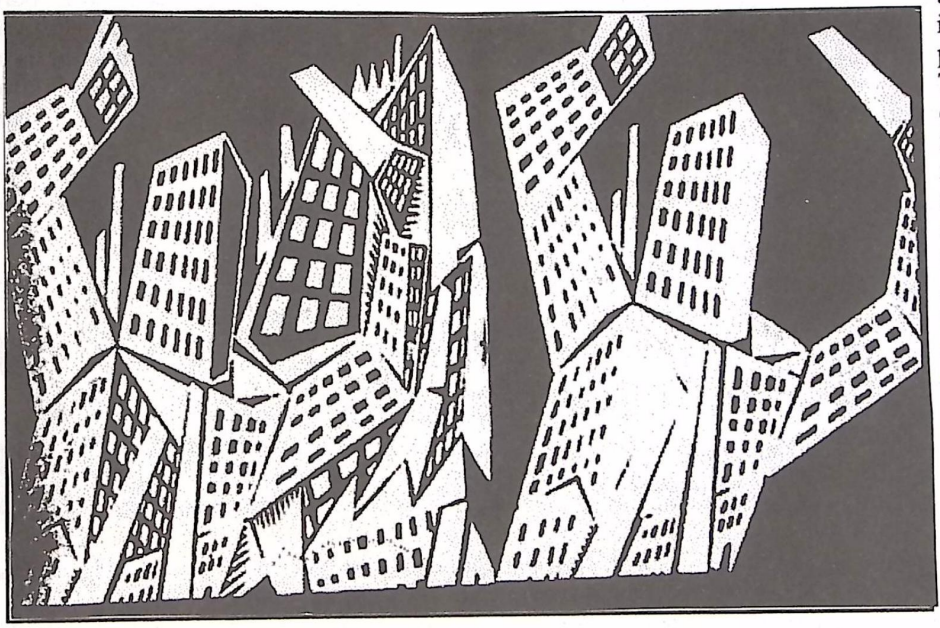
They are not challenging the issue of private property. They are tinkering with the syatem, demanding concessions, trying not to induce panic in the minds of all capitalists and mocking the whole land rights issue

In the context of the rest of their aims it is implausible to assume that this term is being used in a subversive way.The general impression was that the campaign, as well as having reformist demands, was still very middle class, which had put some people off from attending the planning meetings. It seemed as though what we had all thought of as being a part of the movement was becoming increasingly alienated and away on its own trajectory, being assimilated into dominant culture. It seemed we were less into challenging authorities and more into putting a reasonable argument across and winning the hearts and minds of the Guardian-reading public.We were not about radically confronting private property.

And what of Monbiot's "working in partnership with Guinness" theme, where both the campaign and Guinness can come to some compromise? After all, it would provide wonderful P.R. for their environmental record, making it easier to destroy other areas of land. Guinness have so far not come to some" amicable agreement" despite the campaign's pleas. Admittedly campaigners went and told Guiness what they had done and invited them to have a look so in their action there was no compromise, only in the campaigns use of the talks as making them look reasonable to the media.

According to the leaflet we also need: "some physical and political space. This means: New planning guidelines, bolder targets for derelict land use, banning off-site planning gain". Where is the physical space in this? Who decides what is derelict and what does it mean? Is it taking over the few remaining green spaces in the city? And what's all this legitimising the power of the state? With the campaigns own submission of a planning application to the council and "make cheques payable to Land Reform" it is clear that what the campaign is really asking for is a reform in planning policy. They are not saying this land is ours. They are not challenging the issue of private property. They are tinkering with the system demanding concessions, trying not to induce panic into the minds of all capitalists, and mocking the whole land rights issue. Meanwhile in Third World countries these same capitalists they a re coming to compromise with, daily steal land from people in a bid for economic growth. In so doing they become another form of oppression against which the dispossessed must fight. 'The Land Is Ours' is making the land issue safe, ridding it of any potential of changing anything.

The campaign attempts to unite what squatters and travellers have been doing for years, with the permaculturists ideas of sustainability. The campaign uses two methods to do this-: 1) content 2) symbolism and media representation.



If we are talking about real content when it comes to solving "homelessness" etc., we are talking about taking over some of the empty buildings in London and making them more sustainable to cut down on suburbanization ripping up our countryside, not using the few green spaces in the city.The problem with taking over houses would mean that although this type of action could be turned into a media spectacle it would hardly be original and for media interest it would have to be novel e.g. turning Westminster into a squat. The idea to take over a building was also turned down mainly by the permaculturists who wanted to show how to grow things in a more sustainable way. The symbolic part is supposed to involve more people and to educate the public so that they become sympathetic to their aims.....

As regards to symbolism the campaign turned "The land is ours" into something intelligible to the public by turning it into a digestible media package. We could launch into a critique of the media but this is hardly necessary. The danger is that representation becomes more important than that to be represented leading us into the realm of virtual politics. The other side of the coin not mentioned is confrontation (note this could also have a side effect of media spectacularisation) This type of action for example could be taking over a bank or ministers house and filling it with grow bags. This would not be the soft option of taking over a remote piece of land that no one's particularly bothered about, it is certainly more challenging to the Property ethic.

Impinging on the personal property of land owners would be more confrontational, questioning the whole property ethic. Taking over vacant corporate property is something of a neutral territory for a company the size of Guinness. In terms of their annual profits the value of the land in question is next to nothing. Their corporate image, as well as maintaining an appearance of environmental consc ience, could potentially benefit,i.e avoid conflict and give their sterile corporation a human face. No action is without its flaws and because we live in a capitalist society, it seems the campaign balanced the two points well. We should seek to improve our actions but it is equally important how the participants perceive their action in terms of the relationship between its nature and its aims. So let's get down to the real issues here.

No one can deny that the event was mainly a demonstration model for the purpose of influencing future government policy. The fundamental concepts underpinning the land issue are totally ignored by this campaign - i.e. class struggle (approximately 95% of the land is owned by 5% of the population).

Let's look at the specifics of this campaign that have led many to feel this is a specifically liberal campaign. Monbiot's line is that direct action at present (including by implication The Land Is Ours) 'transcends class and traditional loyalties'.

The only reason direct action nowadays has such an interesting alliance e.g. workers and hippies,

capitalists and the exploited is that it is focused on the green issue (primarily environmentalism not ecologism) which is seen to affect everybody. The thing that stands in the way of realising a sustainable ecological future is the organised power of the state. Unless this is taken on board no real change is possible.In common with most others of his type, Monbiot sees his ideas as being apolitical, this is a fundamental error in that liberal democracy is as much a political ideology as any other. It does not cease to be so when stained Green. He puts the neglect of the envir onmental concerns as-"In the absence of meaningful initiatives from government, local authorities and business, it is left to activists to do what these sectors have neglected." To suggest that we are just a reaction to government incompetence and not tha t government laws such as the CJA are a reaction to our struggle is a staggering statement for a direct action group to make - essentially saying that the state/capitalism is somehow inefficient i.e. its not doing its job properly - that we can somehow fill this gap and help them. Environmentalism studies the world in a dualistic and reductionist way having little bearing on relationships in reality. It is purely set up in a way that serves capitals needs. Ecologism assumes relationships in a more interdependent way."There is no such things as species"- see E.O. Wilson's Diversity Of Life for an in depth description. This is all based on the completely incorrect assumption that capital cares! Within this context the very concept of Direct Action is hijacked and used as a tactic to change government policy. Direct Action is not about negating individual responsibility but instead about empowerment to take control of your own life. It is very difficult to call for revolution from one isolated action, some may say they have transitional demands but it's a different story when the very nature of those demands stop any chance of real change i.e. inhibit other peoples struggle against the state.

"Reasonableness" is one of their key themes - based on the liberal view that society is simply composed of individual human beings who share common human interests; hence any conflicts which arise are simply the results of misplaced fears or misunderstandings. "The Land Is Ours" is made up of respectable and honest human beings who are making a valuable but unorthodox contribution to society (i.e. have been forced to take action because government, its agents and business are not doing their job properly). Within this context the way forward is to demonstrate to the rest of society (or the section of it that reads the Guardian at any rate) the reasonableness and positive nature of their demands. The Land Is Ours was about overcoming prejudice, showing the state that we were positive - the campaign was thus apolitical. The Land Is Ours denies the state as a social force The Land Is Ours falls into the trap where the representation becomes more important than that to be represented. The The Land Is Ours is defeatist i.e. notably not thinking about building a movement to smash capitalism because we are too weak to do so. Liberalism presupposes democracy as a freedom to choose. However our choices have parameters; we are only allowed to choose which government to have and the forms of oppression they will use on us. Liberalism is an attempt to disguise this.

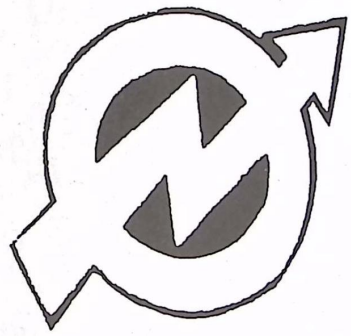
The Liberal is complicit with the system, understands and is sympathetic with all points of view, even those of a radical. However, the liberal draws a line which the radical must not cross. That line is when the actions of a radical challenge the system. The radical is then dismissed as being violent, extremist, unobjective. You can be sure that if the police did wade in on the demonstration and some people defended themselves, the liberal would be the first to turn you over to the police, as you would be accused of discrediting the campaign and therefore not being reasonable. You would be provoking the police to be violent. You become the negotiating tool. Monbiot and his Oxbridge friends identify with the system. They are not the dispossessed they claim to represent. They can see no conflict of interests. Taking the land issue seriously means stopping it being hi-jacked by opportunists like this. You will have to push the destructive nature of this rambling aside. After all the divisive and counter-productive theoretical pettiness of the left itis refreshing to see people going out and doing something. The land issue is a vitally important struggle which has been taken over by those with little or no intention of changing class relationships in society and as a result becomes a safe and toothless part of the very system that oppresses us. Both action without theory and theory without action are equally destructive what is desperately needed is effort towards a unity of theory and practice. The purpose of this criticism is therefore to be constructive.

Written by infantile, paranoid ultra-leftist

Amsterdam Squats Evicted

THE DUTCH MEDIA gathered early on April 2nd. For years reports about "the eviction of the last big squatted house in Amsterdam" had been spread, but the once famous Amsterdam-squatters' movement had re-emerged. The journalists got what they came for: violence, drama, a circus. But, the average age of these squatters was under 20. Due to cutbacks in social security, students' allowances, high unemployment rates, rent-prices rising 6% every year, more young people see no other way to get a roof over their heads than to squat. After the enormous influence of squatters in the early 80's, their downfall in the mid-80's, a new generation of squatters seem to demand their place in Dutch society now.

In Zeeburgerpad,the houses and industrial buildings were to be demolished because the Town-Council wants to build a road. For ten years people in the Old-East part of town have protested that this would cause even more traffic in the already congested City. In 1994 squatters took over the last buildings that were to be demolished for this plan and tried to get a referendum organized. They gathered over 7,000 signatures, but the Town-Council turned it down. While they lived there, the squatters organized concerts and discussions, run a soup kitchen and established an atmosphere of self-organisation.



After fierce resistance, the buildings were taken back by the police and 36 people arrested. That night 100 demonstrators trashed the front of the police headquarters and a police station. Most of those arrested were released.

New buildings have been squatted, but all these squats risk eviction as well, and there's more houses/buildings that will be evicted soon. These evictions will be followed by squatting new houses, too...

Vrije Keyser Radio - Amsterdam, April, 1996

HUNT SABBING after the C.J.A.

Desperate Home Secretary, Michael Howard, introduced the Criminal Justice Act to regain popularity by attacking those he believes are the scum of society. So travellers, squatters and hunt saboteurs became the focus of the blue-rinse loyalists at the 1994 Tory Party Conference.

Unfortunately for the 'get orf moi land' brigade, Mr Howard had not consulted the police about his pronouncements and that is where his trouble started. The police cope (or don't) with many public order activities - demos, football matches, etc,. These have one thing in common. They are basically static, or at least people walk in one direction at a time. In order to stop hunt saboteurs, the police have to catch them when they are on land they are banned from, and disrupting a lawful activity. Above all, they have to catch them...

Photo: League against Cruel Sports

While ten coppers can easily police a demonstration of 100 or a football crowd of 1,000, to stop a hunt sabotage they must match the protesters one for one - and pursue them across often rugged terrain for several miles, then cart them back to waiting police vehicles which also have to be staffed, so that the remaining hunt sab in the bushes does not simply pop up and let their mates out. Now if only twenty sabs in thirty hunt sab groups attack thirty hunts across the country each Saturday, you can quickly count the number of police needed - while they are supposed to be covering major sporting events, prime time shopping, etc. The result over the past two hunting seasons has been that, in many areas, the police have simply allowed the sabs to get on with their peaceful disruption. Arrests for 'aggravated trespass' have often led to acquittals or charges being dropped before they reach court. Where saboteurs have been arrested - on occasion before they have even reached the hunt - and later acquitted or had the charges dropped, they have sued the police for wrongful arrest. This has funded sab vans at the expense of police forces especially Thames Valley. Hunting solicitors are up in arms about this, with Knights of Tunbridge Wells demanding an end to legal aid for the sabs in such cases. It appears that defence against wrongful arrest should not be applied to sabs. According to the Hunt Sabs' magazine *Howl*, police in Norfolk only turned up twice during the first twenty hits of the last season, and even then did nothing to hamper the hunt sabotage.

In some areas, of course, the police have used the new laws to pursue old vendettas. Some sabs are now, as in feudal times, banned from part of Lincolnshire; after refusal of legal aid, ten sabs from Grimsby fell foul of the Earl of Yarborough of the Brocklesby Foxhounds and signed a lifetime injunction. Others have had bail conditions imposed that they are not allowed in the vicinity of a foxhunt, irrespective of where they live, their employment, or their right to protest. So in addition to the often violent attacks sabs receive at the hands of hunt supporters, paid 'stewards' and terriermen (who follow to finish off the fox with spade and terrier), they do still come up against the full might of the law in some areas.

Elsewhere, the police are so impartial that they even attend the hunt ball as guests of the hunt! The policewoman whose sole job is patrolling hunts in the New Forest has not been transferred to another post, despite such (anti) social activity. In Essex, however, the situation is different. After nearly a year's delay, last October saw the trials of 31 sabs arrested the previous November during a mass hit on the Essex Foxhounds. The CPS secured just 10 convictions for 'aggravated trespass', with 3 acquittals, 8 charges thrown out of court half way through, and a further 8 not even getting that far. Two more serious charges against the other two were dropped. The trial took place in Chichester, West Sussex, as the prosecution couldn't find a closer bench of magistrates who did not have hunting connections. The Essex police are the main force determined to enforce the CJA, no matter the cost - £40,000 for one day's policing (helicopter included) in the case above. Appeals and civil actions for wrongful arrest are now in progress.

Hunt sabs have shown great tenacity in resisting the law (if a pick-axe handle in the face doesn't deter you, I suppose a few days in jail is unlikely to) and in many areas the police have simply been unable to enforce it. Of course, some sabs - for many reasons - have dropped out of active sabbing as the law has been tightened. But this has not made them any less committed to campaigning. With the majority continuing, the hunting aristocracy who have payrolled the Tories for so long are now resenting the ineffectiveness of this part of the CJA. Don't take my word for it - just read the letters pages of the hunting press. Foxhunting may not be the most pressing issue for those of us fighting to change society. But it does represent one of the last feudal activities of an outdated, cruel society that would treat the working class like animals if it could. As Auberon Waugh wrote in the Mail a few years ago, 'we should gas the working class like badgers'.

Dan Carter

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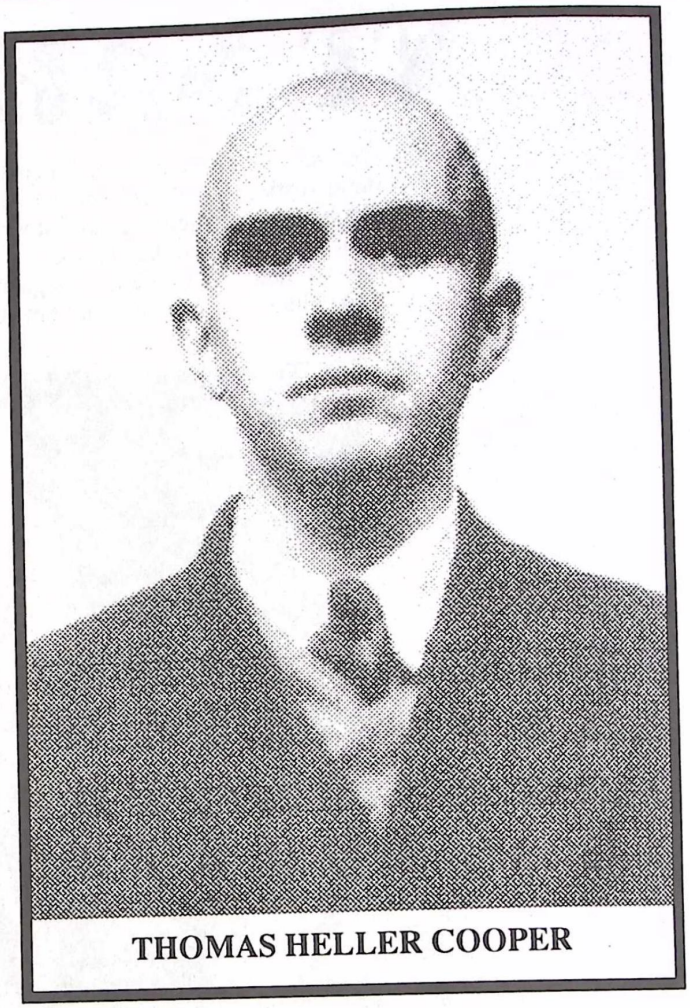
League Against Cruel Sports, 83-87 Union Street, London, SE1 1SG

BRITAIN'S OWN WAR CRIMINAL?

THE STRANGE CASE OF SS-OBERSCHARFHRER THOMAS HELLER COOPER.



THOMAS HELLER COOPER

By Marius Van Der Lubbe

THE PROSECUTION of an alleged War Criminal by the British state, fifty years after the end of World War II opens a new chapter in the double standards of the British Justice system. Britain's attitude to the former Wehrmacht, SS, Waffen SS, SD and their eastern European allies has to say the least been inconsistent. The Nuremberg Trials and the non-existent "De-Nazification" programme at the end of the war were simply a public relations exercise by the western allies, rather than attempt to gain justice for the millions of victims of Nazism. Western governments used the "De-nazification" programme to recruit people like Claus Barbie for its intelligence services, cynically ignoring the blood on their hands. The need for loyal anti-Communist's over rode the demands of Justice, the cold war was beginning and people like "the Butcher of Lyons", with his unique skills were required by the West.

It would of course be convenient to characterise war criminals as Nazi fanatics, eastern European anti-semites and nationalist minorities. But Britain produced at least one man who admitted to participating in the "Final Solution", who British Intelligence were perfectly aware of but who was never charged for his part in it; SS -Oberscharführer Thomas Heller Cooper from Chiswick, West London.

Cooper was born in 1919, the son of a British father and a German mother. He left school in 1936 with a reputation as a loner and a good command of German. He spent 1937 attempting to join the Police, the Royal Airforce and the Royal Navy, but was rejected by all of them, he would claim later because of his mother's nationality. In September 1938 he joined the British Union of Fascists (BUF) and also started making contacts with a Nazi work exchange scheme Reichs Arbeits Deist (RAD) as he still was unemployed. The RAD invited him over to Germany and he left Britain on the 9th July 1939. His plans to work were frustrated when he arrived to find that due to an administrative error the Germans were not expecting him, he was forced to wait till the 20th August 1939 before being offered a teaching post. Less than two weeks later war broke out and Cooper was promptly arrested, but released when he was able to produce a certificate to prove he was Volkdeutsche, acquired incidentally by his German grandmother, whose awareness of international events was obviously a lot more astute than her grandson's.

Cooper was employed as a private tutor until he was introduced to the head of SS recruitment Brigadeführer Gottlob Berger. On the 1st February 1940 he reported to Lichtefelde Barracks, Berlin training base of the SS Leibstandate for enrolment moving later in the month to its artillery training battery. Two weeks later he was posted to the SS Topenkopf Division Infantry training Battalion and in July 1940 posted to the 5th SS Topenkopf Infantry Regiment until February 1941 when he was promoted to Rottenfürher, the equivalent of Corporal and sent to the SS NCO training School at Lauenburg in Pomerania. Finishing his training in May he was posted to SS Topenkopf Wachbatallion Oranienburg stationed near Krakow It was here that he would later boast that he participated in massacring both Polish Jews and Russian Prisoners of War. He unit was officially supervising forced Labour.

In November 1941 he was again promoted to Unterscharführer (Sergeant) and in January 1943 transferred to the Transport unit of the SS Polizei Division. He finally met some Russian's with guns rather than half starved Russian

POW's or defenceless Jews, on the 7th February 1943 just out side Schablinov, Russia, where he was seriously wounded in both legs, for which he would later receive the German Silver wound Badge.

On the 1st June while recovering from his wounds at Bad Mushau military hospital, Cooper was approached by Sonderführer Oscar Lange who was intrigued by the British SS man. On the 6th June 1943 whilst on leave in Berlin, Cooper was ordered to the German Foreign Office's England Committee, where he met Dr. Fritz Hesse.

He was asked to write two propaganda pamphlets on National Socialism for distribution among British POWs. The Germans were attempting to set up a British volunteer force to fight on the Eastern Front as both a propaganda tool and it was hoped, to drive a wedge between the British and Russians. The idea had come from John Amery a Nazi collaborator who had served in Spain as a volunteer for the fascists. The son of Leo Amery, Tory MP for Birmingham South and Churchill's Secretary of State for India . On the 28th Dec 1942 he had been told that Hitler had agreed "with the establishment of an English Legion".

Between 20th April and 4th March 1943 Amery carried out a recruiting drive at St. Denis internment camp, he had a bad reception from the internees and managed to recruit only four men; Prof. Logio an elderly academic who just wished to carry on his studies and was far too old to be of any military value. Oswald Job a British resident in Paris who transferred to the German Intelligence Services trained as a spy, parachuted into Britain near Poole in Dorset, was immediately captured and hung in March 1944. Maurice Turner who was taken with the others by Amery to Paris where he promptly contacted the Resistance and successfully escaped back to Britain with their assistance. The last recruit and the only one to actually join the British Free Corps in November 1943 was Kenneth Berry, a seventeen year old, captured at the age of fourteen while serving as deck-boy on the SS Cymbeline a merchant vessel. Amery's lack of success as a recruiter led to him being dropped by the German's in October 1943 and the "English Legion" became a purely Waffen SS project.

In the Summer of 1942 the England Committee had decided to established a special camp to separate potential collaborators from the rest of British POW's, at Stalag 111 d. near Berlin. Consisting of an officers' camp (special detachment 999) and a rank and file camp (special detachment 517), both of which were presented by the Germans as "holiday camps" away from the poor rations, hard work and cold of normal camps. However the security for the camp was run by the Abwehr, the German intelligence service. One of the prisoners separated and sent to Stalag 111d for an initial examination, from February to August 1942, was Battery Quarter Master John Brown, Royal Artillery, a former member of the BUF. He had been captured after Dunkirk and had developed a good relationship with the Germans, which he had exploited to run a very efficient Black market operation among conscripted foreign workers. Some of the profits from which he had used to buy "luxury" items such as extra food, medicine for the camp hospital and even musical instruments for the camp band. He also had a hidden radio so was well aware of the war's developments. At Stalag 111d. he had quickly realised some thing was amiss, after his visit he returned to Belchammer, his normal camp. There he met Captain Julius Green, a Jewish-Glaswegian officer and the camp's dentist. He handed over to Brown the codes and the means of passing intelligence back to London through the MI9 (Escape and Evasion) network. It was a gamble, Brown was an ex-Fascist, but by the end of 1942 had realised that the Germans were probably going to lose the War. He also knew many other POW's thought him to be a collaborator, so did the Germans! Returning to his normal camp he decided to get back to Stalag 111d. as soon as possible, not only were the conditions far better, he was suspicious of what the Germans were planning at Stalag 111d. After a carefully orchestrated row with all the senior British NCOs at Blechammer he persuaded his friend the Commandant Rittmeister Prinz Von Hohenlohe, to transfer him back to Stalag 111d. He arrived on the 12th June 1943 where he was selected by Major Heimpel of the Gestapo to be senior British NCO of Special Detachment 517 based at Genshagen, a suburb of Berlin. Cooper having finished his pamphlets for Dr. Hesse, joined his convalescence company at Nijmegen, Holland, where his wounds immediately re-opened and he was sent back to hospital for another five weeks. After he went to Berlin for two weeks leave, he once again met Oscar Lange who took him around Genshagen introducing him as Böttcher, German for Cooper. Cooper didn't speak English whilst in the Camp but was asked by Lange to interview Frank Maton a pre war BUF member and commando captured in Crete in 1941, who had volunteered for the Waffen SS. Before his leave was over Lange had got Hesse to transfer Cooper to the Foreign Office and briefed him as to the true reason for the "holiday camps", the isolation of potential recruits for an "English Legion" to fight Soviet Communism. From the 1st June 1943 Cooper became the senior NCO for the nascent British SS.

Brown had early on realised that something was afoot at Genshagen, all the British POW's were ex-fascists, stool pigeons and many openly pro-German, hardly the typical group of British Prisoners. He needed allies so he engineered the transfer of his trusted Black marketeers from Blec-hammer to give him a hand. When the first batch of two hundred prisoners arrived in August 1943 for their "holiday".

In September 1943 Brown learnt the real reason for Genshagen when nursing Carl Britten a fascist British POW suffering from recurring malaria back to health. He discovered that the Germans were recruiting in Genshagen for an "English Legion" and reported it by coded letter back to MI9 who promptly informed MI5's counter subversion F Division. The Germans, having established a nucleus of renegades, decided due to heavy bombing of Berlin and to further indoctrinate and isolate them from the POW population, to move them to a Cafe-Bar at Schönholtzerstrasse in Pankow on the 1st November 1943. Cooper however remained trawling Genshagen's "holiday-makers" for possible recruits and befriending Brown to whom he boasted about massacring Jews and Russian POWs. Brown recalled after the war Cooper claimed to have "...taken part in atrocities against the Jews and had killed several Jews himself" and that "He used to boast about it openly at Genshagen". As well he fantasised about the Gauleiter post that he wanted after Britain's defeat and who he was going to settle the score with, people who had refused him work in 1939!

In November 1943 SS Hauptsturmführer Hans Werner Roepke was appointed liaison officer with the "English Legion" and the Pankow renegades started to be joined by 'recruits' acquired by rather dubious means from a special interrogation camp at Luckenwalde. These men had been forced to join either on threat of punishment usually for forming sexual relationships with German woman or a mixture of aggressive intimidation and

promises of a British SS-Brigade. The pressed men were very unhappy about joining the "English Legion". When Cooper found out about the new recruitment methods he intervened to allow the less than willing recruits to leave, believing a genuine anti-Communist volunteer force could still be recruited. As a result, the 23 recruits of the "English Legion" in November 1943, were reduced to just 8 men by December 1943.

Roepke's first job was get the "English Legion" into shape assisted by the so called "Big Six" Cooper, Francis Maclardy, Roy Courlander, Edwin Martin, Alfred Minchin and John Wilson, the key players in the formation of the "English Legion". The name decided on was "British Free Corps" after rejecting a German suggestion of the British Legion! They were to be part of a force to confront the menace of communism, but the SS and the Foreign Office insisted on a minimum of thirty members, a platoon's worth, to make it credable. Further the SS insisted on waiting for a suitable British Officer to be found to lead it. As for the British SS they were not required to take an oath to blood group and further not subject to German military law, but they would wear German uniforms.

On the 1st January 1944 at a party at Genshagen Cooper announced the formation of the British Free Corps. Roepke found them a base at St. Michael Kloster in Hildesheim near Hanover, a former monastery converted to a SS training camp for foreign volunteers where they moved to in February 1944. They were issued with uniforms, allowed to visit the town unaccompanied and have girlfriends. Cooper remained at Genshagen looking out for recruits among the "holiday-makers", occasionally visiting to give German lessons, teaching them basic drill and how to give a Nazi salute. Also in February 1944 Private Thomas Freeman a commando from Stalag XVIIIa in Austria joined. As a post war intelligence report makes clear "Private Freeman was a member of the British Free Corps but has been cleared of suspicion as it is now abundantly clear the he joined with the object of escaping and sabotaging the movement", something which he managed to successfully do in both cases. In his debriefing by the intelligence service he remembered Coopers boast , "He had himself shot over 200 Poles and 80 Jews in one day - by merely lining them up against a wall and shooting them down . This was in Warsaw." Freeman was a subversive element from the very beginning and more sympathetic than Brown. When his turn came to pair-up for a recruiting drive he told another BFC member Wilson, rather than seek out convinced fascists he knew "..the right sort of bloke to make a real mess..". His obvious intelligence and ability came to Roepke's attention, so on the 20th April 1944 he was given the same SS rank as Cooper, (promoted at the same time) Oberscharführer the equivalent of staff sergeant. The 20th April was a significant for the BFC as a whole with the distribution of unit insignia and a batch of promotions to the growing band of the British SS.

SS-SCHUTZE Kenneth Berry,second left & SS-STURMANN Alfred Minchin, second right, in British Free Corps Uniform .

Cooper was detailed to establish a transit camp in a villa in the Grunwalde district of Berlin . His brief to weed out obviously undesirable element before they joined the BFC proper, to get them to sign recruiting forms and inform them of employment. Cooper however was an SS man, his training and indoctrination by the SS made him deeply unpopular with recruits familiar with the more liberal atmosphere of the British and Commonwealth armies. As one recruit later recalled after watching Cooper practice his goose-stepping technique, "Intelligent- but a stupid bastard as well.".

In June 1943 the steady trickle of recruits had raised the British Free Corps to a strength of 23. This worried Freeman enough to make his move with his ally Ellsmore, a Belgian masquerading as a South African, whose favourite form of sabotage was beating up the unpopular ex BUF member Maclardy in the showers. They succeeded in getting the 14 most resent recruits to sign a letter requesting that they leave and return to their POW status. The Fascist element around the "Big Six" were furious and convinced Roepke to charge Freeman and Ellsmore with Mutiny on the 20th June 1944. Both were interned at Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig from which Freeman successfully escaped in November 1944 making it to Russian lines. The D-day landings on 6th June 1944 sent the BFC into a tail spin, especially Cooper who immediately told Brown to forget his involvement in "atrocities" and Wilson that he had been a "bloody fool".

However without the ability of Freeman the BFC suffered a serious reversal of fortune and had to continue with acquiring pressed men rather than genuine recruits. One of the new batch had five escape attempts under his belt already and another, the only officer to date, Lt. Shearer was actually in a mental hospital when he had signed up. In fact his mental health was so bad that he was repatriated by the Germans on health grounds! The bad feeling degenerated further when Tom Perkins of the BFC stole a pistoland sold it to a foreign worker, he was arrested. This resulted in the so called football pitch mutiny which led to 7 BFC members being sent to an SS punishment camp near Schwerin, one being returned to the Stalags and Perkins being despatched to an isolation camp. On the 4th September 1944 two key Fascist members of the BFC, Maton and Courlander, transferred to the SS 'Kurt Egger' Propaganda Regiment, took advantage of their travel documents to Belgium and deserted back to the British near Brussels.

German frustration at the general incompetence of the BFC and their antics led them to be despatched to the SS Assault Pioneer School in Dresden

Bang to Rights, John Amery captured by Italian Partisans 25th April 1945, executed 1946 Wandsworth prison .

on 11th October 1944 in an attempt to knock them into shape and send them to the front. By now the BFC consisted of only 14 volunteers. Further disasters were to follow for the BFC with Roepke being replaced by the near crippled SS-Obersturmführer Dr Walther Kühilich whose injuries effectively prevented him even visiting the unit that he was 'liaison officer' for. Cooper had had enough. The war was going against Germany and he wanted out of the BFC. He approached the Germanic Administration on 7th November 1944 only to have himself placed under close arrest for various anti-Nazi crimes he had been accused of, dismissed from the BFC and sent to a training Battalion of the of the Leibstandarte Adolph Hitler SS Division. He was to spend the next six months until 6th April 1945 working, ironically enough, as a military police man at Spreenhagen railway station checking passes.

He was then ordered to join the Panzer Corps HQ on 9th April 1945. Cooper could see the writing on the wall. Burning most of his SS documents and packing a civilian suit before joining his new unit at Steinhöffl on the river Oder. The state of collapse that was the Third Reich meant he did not arrive until the 11th April when, to his surprise he was invited to dine with General Steiner, the Corps commander. Steiner wished to know about the BFC, the remnants of whom had just been attached to his unit's armoured reconnaissance Battalion. He was unsure what to do with them and worried what the post-war implications would be for him should he actually commit them to combat against the Red Army. Cooper told the general that they were not fit for combat duty but could probably used as support a short speech of welcome and attached Cooper to them. On the 16th April 1945 Cooper took the remains of Britain's contribution to the crusade against communism, without a shot being fired in anger, out of the line and into the Transport company of Steiner's HQ staff based at Templin. A lack of food however forced Cooper to take a truck and some men back to Berlin to collect Red Cross parcels which the BFC, as POWs were still receiving. On 18th April 1945, in the final act of the farce, Cooper returned to find that a British Officer had finally been found for the BFC. SS Hauptsturmführer Douglas Berneville-Claye, late of B squadron, 1st SAS regiment, deserves an investigation in his own right. Much to Cooper's utter dismay this officer gave a speech telling the BFC that Britain would be at war with the Russians in a matter of days and that he personally had come to lead them, with two armoured cars, into action against the Red Army. Cooper at last showed some spirit telling Berneville-Claye "You've come to drop them back in the shit after I just got them out of it !", this was the only time the BFC wholeheartily supported Cooper, one BFC member later recalling "For once he had spoken like an Englishman". Berneville-Claye left to find the nearest British unit to surrender to, making sure he discarded his SS uniform for an SAS smock he had kept for just such an emergency.

Cooper and the rest of the BFC continued until 29th April 1945 operating as a Transport company, driving trucks, directing traffic and evacuating civilians. On the 29th April Steiner ordered his entire command to break contact and head West to surrender to the advancing Americans rather than the Red Army. On the 2nd May 1945 Cooper and the remnants of the BFC contacted the advancing Americans, most having discarded their German uniforms. They were handed over to Captain D.B. Hart MC of a British reconnaissance liaison team who promptly arrested the lot of them.

Cooper was taken to a British Military prison in Brussels, and from there in September 1945 to Britain to face trial for High Treason, found guilty and sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted. He was released in January 1953, into a world dominated by a new war albeit a cold one. He is believed to have travelled to Japan.

Whilst English Law does not allow a person to be tried for the same crime twice, his conviction for High Treason does not prevent the investigation of him as a war criminal for events such as described by Roy Futcher of the BFC, who recalled Cooper boasting that he "Had been in parties that had rounded up Jews in Poland and thrown women out of top storey buildings." Along with the claims he made to Brown and Freeman, he surely has a prima face case to answer. Whilst anarchists will never stand in the way of genuine justice, it would be a tad hypocritical for the British state fifty years later to prosecute Eastern European Nazi puppets but not their British counterparts. Of course today he would be seventy seven years old, but the consideration of age was never one the Nazis took account of. He may not be alive, but we could at least offer, should his grave be found, to dance upon it.

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NAZI TAKES A DIVE

ROME - Karl Hass, an 84-year-old former SS major claimed that a "rush of blood to the head" spurred him to leap from a hotel balcony to avoid testifying against a fellow ex-Nazi in a sensational war crimes trial. Karl Hass,was due to testify against ex-Nazi captain Erich Priebke. Instead he went to hospital with a fractured pelvis and compressed vertebrae.

Priebke, 82, is charged with organising Italy's worst wartime atrocity, the Ardeatine Caves massacre, where Nazi forces rounded up 335 men and boys, carted them off to the caves outside Rome, and shot them one by one in the back of the neck in reprisal for the killing of 33 German soldiers by partisans in 1944.

Hass has denied any involvement in the massacre but Priebke's lawyer presented to the court documents which he said proved Hass was a main participant.

"Maybe he (Hass) wanted to escape ultimately being charged with the same things as Priebke," said Paola Severino, a lawyer for the civil plaintiffs.

Priebke, who was extradited last year from Argentina where he had lived openly for nearly 50 years working as a hotelier, has said that he and Hass met in Italy in the 1970s.

Chemical World

Phthalates, dioxins, other chemicals and infants

Scientists tell us that there are 500 measurable synthetic chemicals in our bodies which are capable of disrupting our fertility and intelligence. Politicians and industrialists tell us the levels are insufficient to cause these problems. Who do you believe? Who do you trust?
What are the consequences to society of a 5% drop in IQ? What if the decline in sperm count continues to the point that men become infertile?

These are crucial questions because these chemicals are ubiquitous in society. They are found in pesticides, plastics, detergents, cosmetics and environmental pollutants. Eventually, in tiny amounts, they end up in our bodies where they cause a range of illnesses from respiratory disease (on initial exposure), to cancer (up to 20 years after exposure began), and reproductive effects (which begin during cell development in the foetus where the damage is permanent).

Your choice is simple. You can trust the politicians' rhetoric and allow yourself to be exposed to these chemicals, or you can change your life style and do something about it.

We live in a toxic world, some would say a world with its biological diversity in the first phase of meltdown. Yet the print and electronic media trivialise the issue of chemicals in food and in our bodies, not least because scare stories are the rage in our risk management society.

"There's no gain without pain," our ruling elite argue, and we can only agree that if we want to create a world that is a technological and scientific marvel we must take and accept these risks.

It's this "we" that I have trouble with, not forgetting those who make these utterances when we (the majority of global society) meekly question what is happening to us during this quest for the technological nirvana. "Let's not get carried away" cry the bureaucrats and industrialists when someone wonders why chemicals in infant formula milk might be a problem.
It was Lewis Mumford, writing more than half a century ago, who put this debate in perspective when he attempted to clarify why technological progress would have an impact on society. "By putting business before every other manifestation of life," he wrote in The Future of Technics and Civilisation, "our mechanical and financial leaders have neglected the chief business of life: namely, growth, reproduction, development, expression. Paying infinite attention to the invention and perfection of incubators, they have forgotten the egg, and its reason for existence."

So this most recent food-scare is not a problem if you actually understand anything about the means and modes of production, particularly the processes used by the multi-billion dollar, multinational chemical industry and about capitalist industry, particularly its dependence on fossil fuels, petrochemicals and their derivatives. We cannot manufacture our products without these chemicals, industry screams whinging all the while about technological progress. Modern society cannot exist without these products, the chemical industry in particular insists.

This, as you should know, is not true, a point once made by Beeching who did more than most to promote the development of the petrochemical industry. "Instead of producing new products to satisfy existing industrial needs, it is, increasingly, producing new forms of matter which not only replace the materials used by existing industries, but which cause extension and modification of those industries. To an increasing degree it forces existing industries to adapt themselves to use its products."

On one side we have industry and its obsession with technological progress while on the other we have not only the human species but every other earthly species as well. To keep on the track of technological progression the chemical industry must continue to synthesise new compounds combining petrochemicals with chlorine but in doing so it actually creates synthetic chemicals capable of disrupting the fertility and intelligence of thousands of species including humans.

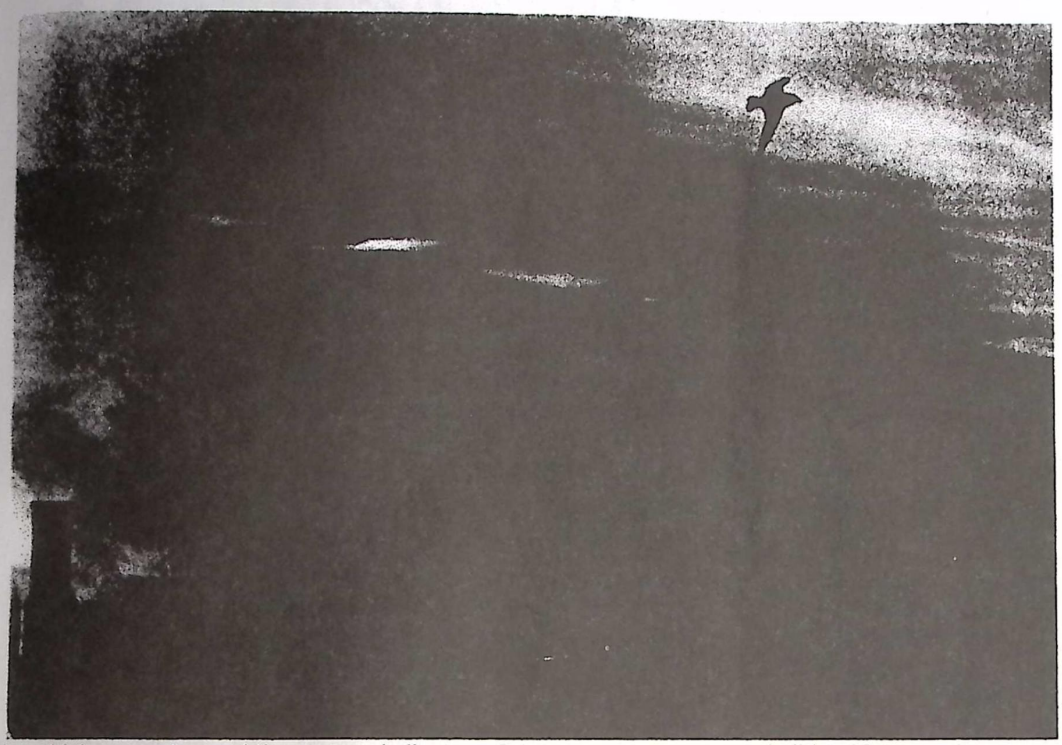
Phthalates, the chemicals found in infant formula milk, are abundant in modern technology; they are known as plasticisers because they soften polyvinylchloride (PVC) and are also used in paints, inks and plastic flooring and covering. If you have been following the debate (and that is all it is at the moment) about environmental oestrogens and endocrine disrupters - synthetic chemicals capable of mimicking and disrupting ovarian hormones - you will know that phthlates are the very tip of an iceberg that contains a myriad of very toxic substances.

If, sadly, you are one of the many out there trapped in wage-slave-television culture, dependent on mass media for your social and political awareness and creative stimulation, you're probably either confused, apathetic or scared shitless. If you are confused you have my sympathy - for the time it takes me to blink; if you are apathetic you rise my anger and despair; if you are scared shitless you give me hope, that you will begin to do something about the ecological and biological damage being done by mankind (sic) to this planet and its species.

The synthetic chemicals present in our air, seas, rivers, soil, grass and food are a major problem, but you don't need to be a toxicologist, endocrinologist, epidemiologist, biologist or environmental scientist to understand what this means. You certainly don't need the media to patronise you while feeding you lies and excuses from bureaucrats, industrialists, politicians and scientists. What you do need to know is that these chemicals do not go away; they do not break down, they are not biodegradable. Because they are fat soluble they accumulate in the cells of each species that encounters them, slowly rising up the food chain where they will stick around for at least seven generations causing gradual and varying degrees of biological damage that might well be irreversible.

Not only do we live in a toxic world, the toxic chemicals live in us - in wildlife and in humans. The damage to wildlife over the past four decades alone from toxic pollution is as sure an indicator as you will find that many species have lost the ability to reproduce or to adapt to environmental change. The anecdotal, never mind

scientific, evidence that chemicals are affecting wildlife has been ignored for years. To echo the words of those scientists who have been trying to alert the ruling elites to this disturbing reality,



"you'd have to be an idiot not to believe that we are next".

Yet despite what the enlightened few are describing as an apocalyptic scenario the media and parliament treat us to a game of trivial deceit, debasing the quality of our lives with scare stories that insult our intelligence.

So yes, we probably are all idiots to believe what the mainstream media tell us. It's worth remembering, if you are old enough, that 'toxic' scare stories in the media have been around since people like Murray Bookchin and Rachel Carson warned us about the dangers of pesticides in the 50s and 60s. There's nothing new about them - the media's presentation is as ignorant as ever; it is the treatment not the content that makes the story for the media. So it is perhaps significant that this summer we have gone full circle with the toxic scare stories of the latter half of the 20th century; notably pesticides, herbicides, pharmaceuticals and synthetic chemicals which are more commonly known as DDT, lindane, 2,4,5-T, dioxin, thalidomide, DES, etc..

But let's start with the thalidomide "scare" story. In 1954 enterprising German chemists created a new drug called thalidomide. It seemed to be an ideal sleeping pill and tranquilliser and after three years of animal tests it was judged so safe that it was approved for over the counter (non prescription) sale throughout Germany. By 1960 thalidomide was Germany's most popular sleeping pill and tranquilliser. It was also a huge financial success and was marketed under 50 different trade names in 24 countries, including Distillers in Britain where it was prescribed as a morning sickness/nausea pill to pregnant women.

Then a report appeared in a British medical journal, indicating that persistent users of thalidomide had developed nerve damage in their hands and feet. In Germany there was an outbreak of phocomelia (which means literally "seal limbs") - a terrible deformity in which babies are born with tiny flipper-like stumps instead of arms and hands. In America a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officer who had been considering an application to market thalidomide in the US asked the chemical company who wanted to market it to conduct studies to show that the drug could be safely taken by pregnant women without harming the foetus. In November 1961 Dr Widuking Lenz in Germany and Dr W.G. McBride in Australia, almost simultaneously, observed that the mothers of several babies with phocomelia had one thing in common, they had taken thalidomide in the first 20 to 40 days of pregnancy. In September the following year the extent of the damage was confirmed.

In the 4 years since 1957, when this wonderful pill was first approved for sale, thalidomide had caused 10,000 cases of birth malformations in western Germany. In England a thousand cases were reported. No one has ever tallied the damage in the other 22 countries where the drug was sold.

Reading this story now probably gives the impression that it broke as soon as the scientists discovered what was happening - but it didn't. Although the Sunday Times 'Insight' team is given and takes credit for breaking the thalidomide story in reality the media has nothing to congratulate itself about, no less than government. Although those critical of synthetic chemicals had tried to alert the wider public to the dangers of the chemical and pharmaceutical industries it was several years before the tragedy of thalidomide became clear and even longer before the British Government and Distillers admitted their liability.

It was 1973 before the Thalidomide Trust was set up to distribute compensation to those born with birth defects as a result of their mothers' misfortune and even then only 460 people were included among those officially deformed by the drug. Distillers graciously gave £19 million, the Government £5m; obviously this wasn't enough to compensate the victims of thalidomide so the Trust had to keep plugging away at the company and at government for more money. Distillers finally paid another £37.5m and told the Trust that was their lot - if they wanted more the government would have to fork out. On June 5, 1996 the Government announced that it would pay another £7m.

Was this a major news story? In some papers it merited a paragraph, in others it was ignored. The reason? Because it wasn't a worthy news story. Yet thalidomide was a quality "scare" story when it broke during the early 60s, simply because its effects were apparent fairly immediately.

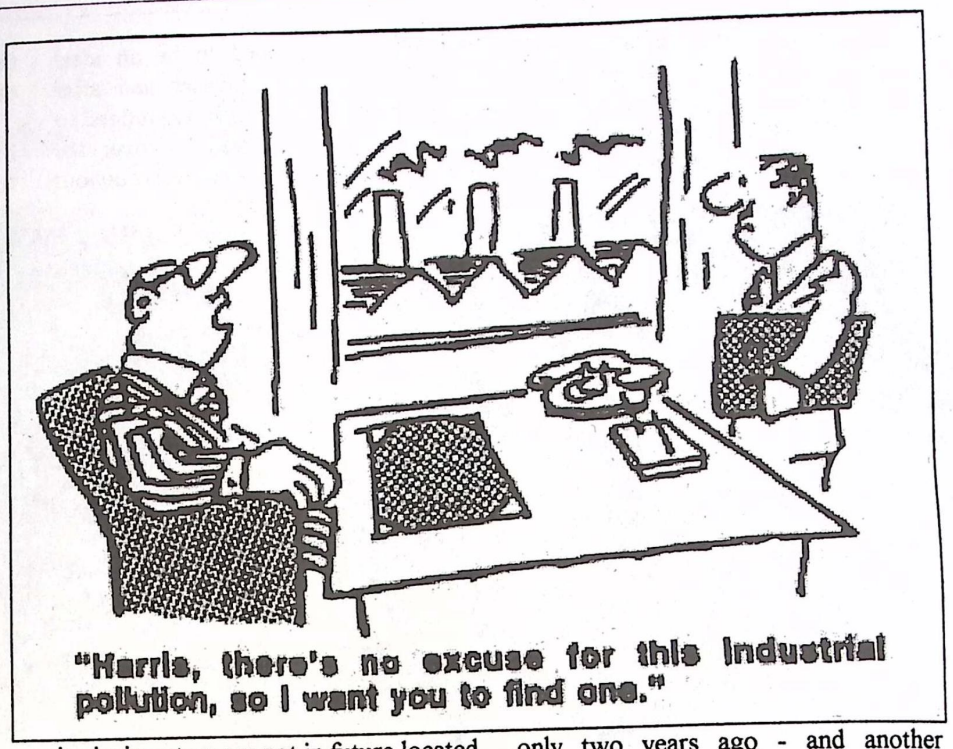
The same cannot be said about phthalates or DDT, or even about dioxins, because, as a news editor of a national newspaper will tell you "there's no dead or deformed bodies." By distorting the phthalates story the mainstream media has, whether deliberately or accidentally, trivialised the issue to such an extent that most people don't know what to believe anymore.

Phthalates are of concern because the levels found by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) have been reported to cause reproductive effects in wildlife. They are an issue because the synergistic effects of endocrine disrupters such as phthalates and dioxins and PCBs work at low rather than high doses - which means that there is no safe level. The body burden of these chemicals is already sufficient to cause damage to fertility and intelligence but don't be waiting for the dead bodies or the deformed babies. Instead consider, as they grow, the intelligence levels of your friends' and neighbours' young children, if after a while you even notice that children are still being born. But of course they are and of course children are as intelligent as they always were; after all I'm just scaremongering - aren't I?

Let's not ask why teachers using the same methods they always have, regardless of trendy "new" methods, are finding the reading age of the average pupil to be well below their biological age; or that the drop in sperm count is being recognised as being accompanied by a decrease in motility (they can't bloody swim) and an increase in mutant sperm that are just not viable...

On the same day that the government announced its £7m payment to the Thalidomide Trust, Shanks and McEwan (who own ReChem) gleefully told the media that they were in pretax profit again. And ReChem, after losing £388,000 in 1994, had made pre-tax profits of £418,000 in 1995. Yet Rechem, who "sue and bruise easily", are one of many filthy firms who make it their business to guarantee the need for future incarnations of the Thalidomide Trust, and for ever larger segments of our population.

In 1990 the Welsh Affairs committee recommended, on the basis of extreme levels of PCB at Rechem, Pontypool, that major incinerators are not in future located near residential areas.



PCBs and dioxins have no safe threshold level, and are the cause of various deformities in new-born babies around the Rechem plant (though legally the victim must prove harm, with no pressure on industry to prove their case - see the recent farce over BSE). These deformities include microphthalmia (no eyelids), and anophthalmia (lack of an eye). Other problems, all seen throughout Britain at this time, and also linked to incineration, include limblessness and skull-plate deformities.

In adults, chloracne, cancers, immunological problems, and reproductive failures (in men and women, the former suffering reduced sperm counts and deformed sperm, the latter suffering, in extreme cases, intersexuality, wherein the "woman" has both female and male genitalia inside herself, neither functional) are amongst the terrible health effects of proximity to these toxins.

These chemicals are becoming common throughout the environment, and no longer just in industrial areas. When we reach the "population threshold" (ie; when the localised effects spread until they join up, making the maps of toxics one big red danger zone), who then will be able to afford "charity"? Despite which, yet another urban incinerator (SELCHP) was opened in Bermondsey, South London, only two years ago - and another is proposed for Woolwich.

Still, June is a good month for scare stories, a prelude to the silly season - as Shanks and McEwan announced their wonderful profits, and the government finally coughed up a little more for the victims of Thalidomide, the US Environmental Protection Agency announced that pesticide use in the USA had reached record levels. According to the Natural Resources Defence Council, which compiled the information for the US EPA, 544 million kilograms of pesticides were sprayed on crops and grassland in the year up to March 1995.

"Many of these chemicals are acutely or chronically toxic, cause cancer, birth defects, are endocrine disrupters and can cause severe adverse environmental impacts," said an official with the NRDC.

But so what! We know from bitter experience that this will make little difference to the capitalist industrialists until it is even more totally too late.

Robert Allen

STATEMENT BY THE McLIBEL DEFENDANTS

Second Anniversary of the start of the Trial 10am, 28th June 1996 - High Court, London

THE MCLIBEL TRIAL, now at Day 270 [counting just the days the court has sat], is the longest running civil case in British history and is scheduled to last until the end of this year. The reason it is taking so long is because McDonald's is trying to suppress a wide range of common sense views on matters of great public interest (as expressed by London Greenpeace) which we naturally have an obligation to defend.

The issues being aired daily in Court 35 are the links between diet and ill-health, the exploitation of low-paid non-unionised workers, the environmental damage caused by mountains of disposable packaging and by cattle ranching, the effects of advertising on children and the suffering of animals reared for the food industry. Effectively the tables have been turned and it's McDonald's and their business practices that are on trial.

McDonald's Dirty Tricks

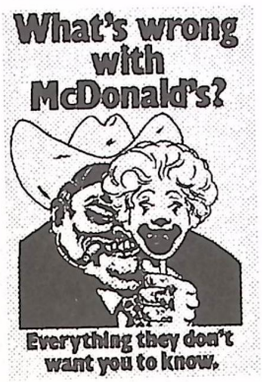
In the past two weeks, four private detectives hired by McDonald's to infiltrate London Greenpeace have testified. The company has now admitted that it controversially engaged no less than seven spies, who got fully involved in the group, stole letters, secretly followed people home, and broke into the group's offices - a disgusting and sinister abuse of the friendly and open nature of the group. And what's more, they distributed the very leaflets that McDonald's are trying to suppress, so we have now formally claimed that McDonald's thereby consented to the leaflet's publication. Today another of the 'enquiry agents' who "felt very uncomfortable" infiltrating London Greenpeace and who "did not think there was anything wrong with what the group was doing" will be testifying for the Defence.

McDonald's Plans Backfire

Despite spending $1.8 billion dollars worldwide annually on advertising and promotions, McDonald's has consistently sought to silence those wishing to put over an alternative point of view. However, McDonald's efforts to intimidate and silence its critics have completely backfired, and have only angered the public and strengthened the determination of campaigners here and all over the world. Over 1.5 million "What's Wrong With McDonald's" leaflets have been handed out to the public in the UK alone since the writs were first served on us, and thousands of people have pledged to continue to circulate anti-McDonald's leaflets whatever the verdict at the end of the McLibel Trial. Leaflets have been translated into 24 different languages and are being distributed worldwide. On top of this there is now an internet website, 'McSpotlight', where comprehensive information about the trial and McDonald's can be accessed worldwide at the push of a button (http://www.mcspotlight.org/).

It is clear that the campaign and the distribution of anti-McDonald's leaflets are unstoppable, and the trial has only served to give them greater impetus and publicity.

McDonald's original official estimate was that the trial would last "3 to 4 weeks". But despite all the odds being stacked against us - for example: no Legal Aid, facing complex and unfair libel laws and being denied a jury trial - we have learned as we've gone along. McDonald's have brought their big guns into the witness box - over a dozen executives from Chicago and the UK, up to the level of President. They have been forced to make many admissions about McDonald's practices, and a great deal of previously secret information has been unearthed. This has provided a unique and vital insight into how multinational corporations - who dominate the world's economy - achieve and maintain their power.



This, along with the overwhelming public support and donations we've received, has given us the encouragement and strength to continue this "David vs Goliath" battle. We thank everyone who's expressed their concern and support.

McDonald's View of the Case

A confidential internal memo from McDonald's in Australia (leaked to the media and broadcast widely last year) revealed the Corporation's dilemma around the world with media coverage of the trial: "Contain it as a UK issue". "We could worsen the controversy by adding our opinion". "We want to keep it at arms length - not become guilty by association". "This will not be a positive story for McDonald's Australia". The aim is to "minimise any further negative publicity".

Settlement Negotiations

McDonald's at their own initiative have twice arranged negotiations with us in order to pursue ways of ending the case. Members of their US Board of Directors have flown into London at 24 hours notice to meet with us. Our position remains that they should give an undertaking not to sue anyone again over similar statements to those made by London Greenpeace.

We would not like to see a repetition of such a case again - it's the public's right to criticise the practices of multinational corporations who dominate our lives, the world's economy and the environment. We call for the abolition of the right of multinational corporations to be able to sue for libel. Our aim is a society based on sharing and cooperation, where people, animals and the environment are not seen as the means for a minority to make their profits.

Helen Steel (30) & Dave Morris (42) - The McLibel 2

Coming Events:

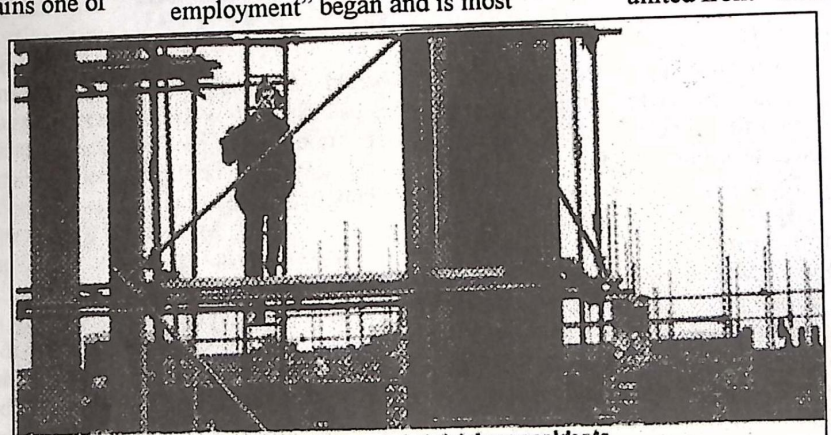
McLibel Gathering 29th Sept. 1996. 10.30am - 8 pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.
Day of discussion, networking and education.
Day of Solidarity with McDonalds Workers 12th Oct. 1996.
Picketing of stores to mark the 4th anniversary of the death of electrocuted McDonalds worker Mark Hopkins.
Worldwide Day of Action against McDonalds 16th Oct 1996

McLibel Support Campaign, c/o 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 9DX. Tel +44 171 713 1269

Rank and File or Broad Left: Democracy versus Bureaucracy

A short history of the Building Worker Group by Brian Higgins. Produced and Published by the Colin Roach Centre/Resistance £1.50. available from 2 Bitten Court, Lumbertubs, Northampton.

I feel old, I really do. In February 1986 I quit my job at the start of what turned out to be nine months on the dole, and walked straight onto a picket line. The "Laing's Lockout Committee" dispute remains one of the most significant of the post-Miners' Strike era, full of lessons about the possibility of resistance in the face of the most difficult of conditions and determined of opposition. It is at the centre of this excellent pamphlet. Congratulations to the Colin Roach Centre for publishing this.



Building workers rank among those most at risk from accidents.

The dispute taught me a lot, especially about the power of picketting where there is a history of union organisation, and a memory of solidarity, even though actual organisation has died. In the short term it can galvanise people who've been inactive for years and inspire those with no previous experience of union militancy. In the medium term they need workplace organisation to support them, in the context of wider class consciousness and organisation.

I also learned the need for guerilla tactics, stretching the bosses and their agents - union officials, the courts, police, etc. This spreads the dispute in the face of media blackouts - PR is not an option for workers who fight to win - and gives you a chance. If you stay in the same place, sooner or later pressure to cross picket lines is going to bite. The Old Bill also made up a law that only six pickets were allowed at each gate, derived from TUC/ACAS guidelines, and enforced it through the catch-all "obstructing a police officer" charge.

This is not just about the last of the Rank and File groups initiated by the then International Socialists (now SWP) in the 70's. It analyses of the realities of site and union organisation in construction. As well as being one of the most dangerous industries, where "health & safety" is non-existent unless enforced by militant organisation, this is where the bosses' preference for bogus "self-employment" began and is most blatant. All the rights belong to the boss, all the responsibilities - tax, National Insurance, holiday pay, health & safety - to the "self-employed" worker. The art of making industrial action "secondary", and therefore illegal, has also been perfected here by the use of labour-only sub-contractors, many of them gangsters.

Higgins sets out the need for "United Front Rank and File Organisation" to bring together "revolutionary ... and reformist workers ... by far the majority" around immediate demands, workplace organisation, and a longer term strategy. These are all-industry organisations, with no divisions by political or union affiliation or lack of either. The R&F group "should be the bridge between more popular economic and democratic site issues and the more difficult" political ones.

This is remarkably close to the Industrial Networks which form part of the Solidarity Federation, and is a big improvement on the standard "join the union, then form a rank and file group within it to oppose the officials" line of the left (when they're not cheerleading for those traitors, that is). However, I believe the majority of workers are not actively reformist, but apolitical, and to address ourselves to reformism (ie the left, Blair will reform nothing) is to give it room to manouevre. Where anarcho-syndicalists differ from this approach is not to separate the political from the economic by assuming the need to tone down politics in order to form a "united front" with reformists.

He goes on to outline the origins of the BWG and its split with the SWP in 1981/82 having developed a life of its own and outgrown the SWP's politics. As a former member of both the BWG and the anarcho-syndicalist Direct Action Movement once put it, "without subordination to a strong working class organisation, the middle classes are only capable of achieving party consciousness".

As well as the Laing's story, the violence inflicted on union militants by gangster subbies and the state is highlighted, as is the corruption and collaboration of the unions, particularly UCATT - names are named. The pamphlet also covers the decline of the Construction Safety Campaign into a "credibility" device for corrupt union official Tony O'Brien and his cheerleaders in the Workers' Revolutionary Party and SWP, as well as our old friends the Stalinists. Critiques of both the Joint Sites organisation in 1992, and the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee - unofficial union organisations - round off the pamphlet. Buy it, read it, learn the lessons in it.

Peter Principle

What is Situationism? A reader

AK Press £9.95 (value or what!)

The answer, according to this collection[1] is load of art toss hiding behind May 68 events for credibility.

This collection is aimed at the cultural studies/art student market. Most of it is taken from art mags and concerns a situationist art exhibition sometime in 1989 and is therefore highly important[2]. The exceptions are Jean Barrot's "Critique of the Situationist International" (published elsewhere on its own as "What is Situationism?") and a seriously dated but interesting critique of Punk; "The End of Music" (again, this is mostly in "Like a Summer of a Thousand Julys" about the '81 Riots).[3]

What is most striking about the collection is the lack of enthusiasm most of the writers seem to have for revolutionary social change. I may be naive to have expected it. Other than Barrot and the Wise brothers only Bob Black seems to think that there should be any revolutionary perspective to situationism.

[1] situationism always has lots of footnotes. These will be superceded with the advent of the word processor.

[2] it is good to see that for all the emphasis on rigorous theoretical clarity, situationists are as bitchily sectarian and petty as anarchists.

[3] Republishing old texts at inflated prices is what is known as "recuperation".

Squatters Handbook 10th Edition (£1 + 38p postage from Advisory Service for Squatters, 2 St Pauls Road, London N1 2QN)

Despite the CJA and media lies squatting is still legal. The new squatters handbook is vital reading for anyone interested in squatting whether for housing or for social space. The possibility of squatting for refugees as part of an effective resistance to the Asylum Bill is another area this book will be useful.

ASS who produce the handbook have been going for 21 years, relying completely on donations, giving advice and helping defend court cases but their role is strictly limited. More needed than ever are sussed local squatters groups with up to date local information, links with other people fighting the state and a commitment to the practical politics that gets anarchists a good name.

ASS is open 2-6pm, mon-fri. tel 0171 359 8814.

Destined To Live; memoirs of a Doctor with the Russian Partisans
Leon Berk, 1992, Paragon Press

If you are of a nervous disposition do not attempt to read this book. It is certainly one of the most harrowing that this reviewer has read.

Leon Berk was born in the eastern part of Poland close to the border of the USSR. Polish anti-Semitism forced him to study medicine not in Poland but Fascist Italy. Finding himself in the Soviet-occupied Zone in 1939 he completed his studies at Lvov in 1941, literally days before the Germans over ran the city.

Whereas Fascist Italians regarded anti-Semites as daft, the Ukrainians in Lvov, with the benefit of twenty years of Soviet Socialism, fell upon the Jewish population in a fury of unimaginable savagery. Nearly six thousand Jews were brutally murdered in three days at the hands of the Germans' Ukrainian allies. Beck survived due the intervention of an elderly German officer appalled by what was going on and was actually released due to a lack of space. To escape Lvov, Beck and a friend managed to apply, as Jews, for passes from the German Military Authority to return to Poland. These saved their lives when captured by Ukrainians who were too frightened to decapitate Jews with official German passes.

Walking five hundred kilometres back to their home town in the summer of 1941 gave them a taste of the madness gripping Europe. Attacked by their fellow Poles for being Jews, helped by others and even fed by a friendly young SS man, they finally made it home and straight into the ghetto. Convinced of their impending liquidation his father organised his escape with one of his ex-employees, a Polish moonshine maker. He eventually made contact with Russian partisans, Polish partisans had refused him as a Jew despite the fact that they had no doctor. It was precisely his skill as a doctor, operating with minimal equipment, no drugs and vodka often the only anaesthetic, that won him acceptance with the Russians, despite the anti-Semitism of the partisan commander and the commissar.

The brutal and barbaric nature of partisan warfare on the Eastern Front is brought vividly to life with the terror and torture rigorously practised by both sides making sober reading.

Overrun by the advancing Red Army, Beck joined the Soviet sponsored Polish Army and continued serving till the end of the war as a doctor.

Leaving war torn Europe he made his way to Israel, but disturbed by the Arab-Israeli conflict, he emigrated to Australia in 1956.

"Destined to Live" is a catalogue of horrors, written from the experiences witnessed by this dedicated and humane Jewish doctor. However terrible the contents, it remains an absorbing, informative and thought provoking book.

DM

WE ARE NOT PART OF THE FUCKING LEFT!

The latest issue of Red Action contains a few gems, not least a long quote from Albert Meltzer's book (they spell his name wrong -Green Anarchist disease?) about their members' involvement with the IRA, where Albert calls them neo-Trotskyites. They retort "We are not fucking Trotkyists!". Fair enough. A bit further on, they attack Black Flag, a section of the left according to them, for calling their Scottish organiser's actions outrageous. They go on to detail how he and his mates attacked an anarchist antifascist meeting and throw in a bit of misinformation about ALF tactics along the way. Clearly indiscriminate violence is OK with them, though I'm not going to go into detail on this episode here.

We would like to make it clear that Black Flag is <u>not</u> part of the left.

The left is defined in relation to the government of the day and we're against the lot - Major, Blair, Tony Cliff, and even (especially?) a Red Action government. In practical terms we work with people who do see themselves as on the left, but as Red Action themselves always moan - the left is just a playground for the middle classes. Anarchism is too broad to be shoehorned into this squabbling mess of would be dictators and dilettantes.

Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism
an unbridgeable chasm.
Murray Bookchin
AK Press. £5.95.

Is Anarchy going to become chic boutique lifestyle subculture? and if so which badge do I buy?
Now I personally detest reviews that only tell you what the reviewer thinks, (o.k. so I was brought up wrong). I am not about to express my views, but you'll get my drift when I say that for £5.95 you could buy 6 Squatters Handbooks, 4ish pints of beer, 9 packets of gum, go see Millwall play for 3 seasons, see 6 bands and still have change to cycle home. Not that I'm saying that the book isn't of interest or gives you an insight, but yet again we are subjected to the droning on of the "lets get structured or else you're doomed brigade". Now we all see Anarchism as a liberating force that through taking control creates a positive centre or society of its own making, accepting the vulnerable elements as well as the strong in people and the collective. Don't we? This book poses basic searching questions including, "Is Anarchism going to remain a revolutionary social movement?" and in answering these Bookchin takes us through a brief trip of various ideas from L. Susan Brown, Hakim Bey, George Bradford, to name but a few, arguing well and with certain depth with each. His venom does seep through with each sentence. Which is fine, yeah? then the reader can debate with the two ideas yeah? but no plot, laughs, sex or car chase. If you want a quote from the book buy it. In the second half we get a history of the left, Murray's personal view. The book is for an American audience, and like English football one good game every thirty pages or so, personally I reckon it's worth liberating.

E.C.

There are days when you wake up with the wrong tune in your head.
What changes it? You or the World?
Think about it.
This is an important issue...internal vs. external.
Know what I mean?
If you change does it change.
See what I mean?
And how much do you have to change before it does?

Am I just a borderline case?

When I looked out of the window I witnessed a load of bollocks going on, people giving each other verbal shit.
I enjoyed it.
Well what was I to do?
Change me or the world?

So, I walked down the street whistling the bloody thing, then of course the whistle turns into a hum, quite a tuneful hum, bright and breezy being a nice day blue sky and all that. The hum gets louder and a few words enter the scenario then low and behold I am singing, this goes on. I'm at the tube station happily humming, singing away. One person, sort of good looking, (you got it) looks at me, oh fuck I remember what the tune is, stop, red faced (well you would be wouldn't you) I mean.
Now they could be looking for all sorts of reasons, like; who is that red faced geek or who is that amazing person aren't they on the telly?, or they could be deaf or short sighted, they even could have the same bloody tune in their head.
So the tune gets blocked by the outside force which reflects inside me.
Why?

The English, a friend of mine said, have a tolerance of chaos, and was this linked to English children's perverse love of talking about bodily functions, shit etc.
I mean the Germans have weird toilets, a shelf where you can analyse the stuff to see how well you are.
(I know how well I am, thank you, fucking awful)
O.k. so you don't get splashed, but that can be negotiated.

So, I hear some of you boring fucks saying 'What has this to do with revolutionary politics?'
Well,...Go piss on Lenin.

How many times do you have to fall off a horse until you say, I don't like horses they make me sneeze.

There are days when you wake up with the wrong tune in your head.
And it stays there.

Emotional Cripple.

As part of our commitment to open debate (with anyone who doesn't upset our paymasters at AK distribution/ MI5) we stupidly agreed to print the following piece from the Between The Lines group. BTL is an attempt to present left wing ideas in an interesting and thought provoking way. Also they are not a bad bunch of people with a healthy activist outlook and reasonable standards of personal hygiene. Sad then that their politics is matched only by their poetry.

Why Anarchists Should Join the Labour Party.

What is an anarchist? Is it someone who sticks to a rigid set of beliefs, listens to horrible music and wears horrible clothes or is it someone who wants to change society by challenging all hierarchical power ? I'm not sure.

Since getting involved in politics 10 years ago, I have come into contact with a lot of people who claim to be anarchists, some of them have been very nice, a lot of them have been rather sad. What I like about anarchists is that they understand you can't build a new society by just replacing one set of ideas with another. What isn't so good is that most of their other ideas are just as reactionary and hopeless as the hierarchical revolutionaries of the SWP type groups. What really annoys me is how predictable you are.

Some of you obviously rather like being in the ghetto. That feeling of superiority, of knowing best, talking to like -minded people who look like you. Some of you though are not happy with being in this ghetto and do actually want to change the world. The second group is the one that I'm interested in.

How are you going to change the world ?

Well you've rejected the Labour Party for a start. You know the old trot groups would be as bad as the Stalinists if ever they came near any power. So what is your alternative ? Community struggles, strike support and the hope that one day enough people will come to their senses and we will be able to overthrow capitalism. Dream on. This "run around and hope" philosophy is all very well but how is it moving things in the right direction ? How are you getting your ideas across to Joe Public, through Black Flag and other papers, through Chumbawumba and other anarcho popsters. Dream on and on.

Challenging State Power

Thinking back to that great day for all of us who believe in violent reformism, the Trafalgar Square Poll Tax Riot showed that Anarchists can at times be politically effective. The problem was that although the Poll Tax and Thatcher were shelved they were replaced by other nasty laws and John Major.

All or Nothing

The problem with people who believe in all or nothing politics is that they're wrong. The changes that need to come about to build a society free of oppression can only come about gradually. Anarchists can only influence events by getting involved in mainstream politics, which means getting involved with the Labour party. You Anarchists have rejected mainstream society and settled for a fashion statement as an alternative to changing the world.

The Lovely Labour Party

The way some people think of the Labour Party is as a single entity. The fact is that it has always been a broad church, with some very dodgy vicars. The mass of the Labour Party believes in gradual change. This is the only change that can be sustained. Short cuts in social change e.g. revolution have always ended in misery for the masses like in eastern Europe and China.

If you go down to the Labour Club tonight.. you're sure of a big surprise: the Labour Party is the closest thing we have to a socialist party in this country. Debate is allowed (though not encouraged). It expels fewer people than a tiny group like the SWP. It is not full of great people changing the world but if the ideas of the Labour Party are lacking it's because the ideas for social change in this country are also lacking.

Long Live Tony Blair

I love Tony Blair, this surprises some people but I think he is the best Labour Leader ever... *(it got a bit gross here and had to be cut)*

Democracy is a good thing. The fact that we have the right to vote for some of our representatives in power is good. It is not enough. We should have more democracy; the right to elect not only MPs but bosses, judges etc. The suffragettes fought for the right for women to vote. They did not believe that this would be enough but it was a move in the right direction. The Labour Party is changing and becoming more democratic. Every socialist should welcome the decision to end the block vote and curb the power of the union bureaucrats. The old unrepresentative left in the Labour Party is dying out. There is now the chance for a new opposition that genuinely believes that ordinary people should have power over their own lives.

The left wing philosophers are searching for ideological purity. Meanwhile the forces of big business and repression are tightening their grip. Still the left wing philosophers argue. In this circle the thing to do is to sound more radical or hard-line than those around you to gain their respect. Inequality and misery still continue but at least you feel better knowing that you had never compromised with aagh those hated reformists.

Ray's Poem ~the only reason for printing this at all.

The world we live in is not a nice place.
But there's no need to go around with a miserable face.
You can smile and make the world a little better,
you can join the labour party and buy a new sweater.
You can be an anarchist with your fashionable chums,
live off the state and scrounge off your mums.
You could join the Labour Party and make the world better.
You could send Mr Blair a signed love letter.

Hold on to your Ideological Purity

I know that most of you will dismiss this as a joke. You will carry on with your lives and your ideas will be isolated in the ghetto of black jeans and academic arguments. Good Luck.

Ray Kent
Between the Lines, Box 32, 136 Kingsland High St, London E8 2NS.

PORNOGRAPHY

Following the article on porn in issue 206 of Black Flag, we received only two letters, one expressing agreement and the other, disgust; interestingly both were from men. The latter was from 'Rich' from Cambridge and much as I'm against censorship, to reproduce the letter in full, would be to subject our readers to nine pages of rant, remarkable for its imaginative use of abusive adjectives but rather lacking in the old verb front. It starts with:

"'*Dear' 'Comrades', I recently received another copy of Black Flag and was informed my subscription had come to an end: ever since being confronted by the sickening, crass, pathetic, article on pornography by some cretinous little dickhead called Lou, I want nothing more to do with any organisation or publication promoting such stupid, moronic, filth and so I am glad to be rid of you bastards for good. Yes, you have reached a new and unbelievable low....*" and finishes nine pages later with the touching line; "*EAT SHIT AND F.O.A.D YOU BASTARDS*"

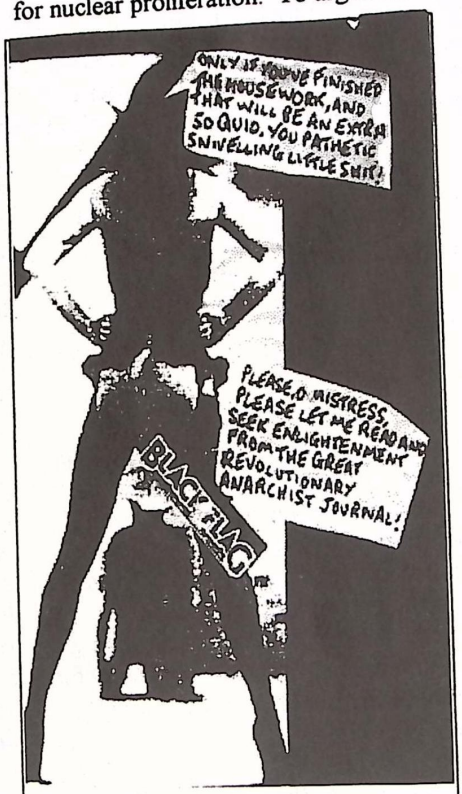
However there are, hidden amongst the invective, some points that deserve attention which I shall attempt to address below:

Firstly he agrees that to demand increased powers of the state to control the sex industry would be futile and contrary to anarchist principles, but states that to "*seek improved conditions or any respect or compassion or dignity for women in an industry which degrades, brutalises and dehumanises countless women men and children as sexual commodities for the profits of evil, sadistic, misogynistic scum*" would be equally futile.

He slags off anarchists who "*seem to see supporting and perpetuating any industry in the name of the workers and getting a 'good deal' from capitalism, such industries whereby their very nature need to be utterly opposed by every means and every effort...*"

He says the suggestion that *"we cannot be judgemental" in supporting any industry, regardless of how inhumanly destructive.....it is yet don't support workers' in the police force or prison service..."* is comtemptible "*...it IS clearly unacceptable to support <u>some</u> workers in <u>some</u> industries at <u>some</u> point....*"

There is a clear distinction between the police and prison forces and workers in the sex industry because the former have unequivically put themselves in an anti working class position where the very nature of the job is to police and control our lives. We have no choice over whether we are subject to the powers of the police, but we do have the choice whether or not to consume pornography. Even if porn leads to rape / abuse etc. which I strongly dispute, workers in the industry cannot be held responsible for this, anymore than miners working for a pittance for RTZ can be held responsible for nuclear proliferation. To argue that we should not support workers trying to 'get a better deal under capitalism' because we don't approve of the industry whether they be defence workers, McDonalds workers, road builders or pin up models is purist nonsense. To support women's demands for safe working conditions, increased pay, more control over the images they help produce etc. would do more to damage the profits of porn industry bosses than trashing the odd newsagent ever would.


ONLY IF YOU'VE FINISHED THE HOUSEWORK, AND SO QUID, YOU PATHETIC SNIVELLING LITTLE SHIT!
PLEASE, O MISTRESS, PLEASE LET ME READ AND SEEK ENLIGHTENMENT FROM THE GREAT REVOLUTIONARY ANARCHIST JOURNAL!
BLACK FLAG
Well, we did ask for graphics... thanks Rich!

Recently prostitutes in Haringey have been harrassed out of safer residential areas and forced to work in the dimly lit streets around industrial estates instead by the police and the local community, resulting in numerous attacks on the prostitutes by clients because of the isolated position. Would Rich support such a campaign? Or would he denounce the activists in Haringey Solidarity Group who have been supporting the right of the prostitutes to work unmolested in the area of their choice?

Secondly he objects to my suggestion that anti porn campaigning diverts responsibility for the abuse of women from the perpetrators, citing the example of anti-fascists who fight against fascism but would hold individual fascists responsible for their actions. Ultimitely he does argue that porn directly encourages rape, child abuse and sexual violence, though qualifying this by saying that it is, of course, not the sole cause, just a link in the whole chain of global oppression.

My argument that the status of women in states where porn is unavailable, such as Saudi Arabia, is worse than that of women in states with liberal attitudes to porn such as Holland is countered with asking whether I would suggest that "*legalisation and mass consumption of porn in places such as Saudi Arabia would vastly improve women's social and sexual status .....and what makes this fucking dickhead think that the status of women in Holland is so fucking great, displayed through windows onto the street like lumps of meat in a fucking butchers shop...*"

Of course I don't think that the legalisation of porn in Saudi Arabia would vastly improve womens' social and sexual status; porn is irrelevant. In countries where women are unable to access education, paid work, contraception, participation in the political process etc. sexual abuse flourishes because women cannot escape their abusers without becoming destitute. Ironically the only opportunity for survival is often prostitution. However porn plays no part whatever in this scenario. Porn is banned, not because it is offensive to women, but because sexual expression outside the family is taboo.

I don't think the position of women in Holland is 'so fucking great', it isn't, but it is a damn sight better than that of women in most countries where porn is banned. Furthermore, the 'women displayed through windows onto the street like lumps of meat' are in a considerably safer position than women forced to work underground, on the streets under the dubious protection of pimps in Britain where the ridiculous vice laws prevent women from 'soliciting' openly. As long as patriarchy and capitalism continue to

enforce women's second class status women will work in the sex industry, whether through choice (and yes women are capable of making such choices) or through economic necessity. Maybe it the visibility of prostitution in Holland that offends Rich so much, but I contend that visibility is the key to improving the conditions of sex workers.

Rich goes on to argue that "*anyone in the sex industry is a victim ..., anyone who sees something so intimate and personal as their own sexuality as something to be bought so easily, manipulated, distorted and misrepresented and reduced to an alienated commodity to be bought, sold and possessed, controlled, solely for profit is by definition a victim of the most deep and pervasive process of conditioning, brutalisation and dehumanisation under capitalism....*" and that if it is true that some women find working in the sex industry less demeaning and exploitative than traditional womens' work it is because "*patriarchal sexist conditioning in a capitalist society is responsible for such attitudes where women everywhere suffer sexual harassment and abuse in the home, on the street and in all forms of employment....many women turn to the sex industry as they have accepted this oppression and have resigned themselves to making the best of it and getting what they can get out of it.*"

Women in the sex industry are not selling their "sexuality" they are either modelling for photos or films, speaking on telephone sex lines, acting in sex clubs or selling sex. Other workers sell their bodies (manual workers, often becoming disabled due to dangerous working conditions), their time, their integrity (sales jobs) etc. Are women in the sex industry incapable of analysing their own position? Are they so stupid that they can't recognise their own oppression as workers? No; they, like all other working class people, live in the real world where the only means of getting necessities is to sell one's labour. They are no more victims than anyone else, and it is patronising in the extreme to suggest that women have been so conditioned that they can't think for themselves.

Rich defines porn as "*sexually explicit material, specifically depicting the eroticised abuse, subordination, humiliation and dedragation of women, dehumanised as objects or commodities to promote sexual arousal.*" saying that I believe such material to be a liberating force for women, freeing us from the myths of the capitalist nuclear family, ownership and domination by men.

This definition of porn is convenient for his argument, but it is obvious that porn is a very diverse category which indeed includes such material, but also includes sexually explicit imagery that is not concerned with the degradation of women. When I said that some material depicts women who actively want and enjoy sex, he countered with "*certainly it (porn) depicts women who actively want and enjoy sex, but... as brutalised, dehumanised objects who enjoy being used for sex, insatiable for any form of sexual degradation, abuse, subjecation, humiliation and punishment they are said to need and deserve.*" Well either the imagery is showing fantasies of women enjoying sexual activity or women feeling humiliation, dedragation, abuse etc. He can't have it both ways. I suspect that Rich can't conceive of women actually enjoying sex, he seems to find the whole idea distasteful.
Further on he says "*women are abused* (in porn) *as sluts'*...etc... *even more unbelievable some so called feminists are even labelling themselves as sluts' while ... dressing / looking 'sexy' or provocative' and imagining ... they are "subverting" such values, rather than reinforcing them.*" Oh dear, here we have it, he wants us all to dress in dungarees and to moan about how much we hate sex.

However there *is* a wealth of material that is degrading and I certainly wouldn't shed tears over the untimely death of the likes of David Sullivan or the smouldering remnants of a porn warehouse. But it is dangerous to lump all pornographic material within the narrow confines of his definition. And there is also the question of *who* defines what is degrading, abusive etc. Anyone who sees sex as a dirty activity will find that all pornography fits Rich's defifnition. I don't think that porn liberates women as such, but I do think that a climate where sexually explicit material was seen for what it is, where women and men were able to express and communicate their sexual fantasies without inspiring fear and loathing would be far healthier for women than the present sexually repressed and immature society that we live in now.

Lou

CLASS WAR: THE ATTACK ON WORKING PEOPLE by Noam Chomsky

Well! what to make of Noam Chomsky's new "hit" CD from AK. Firstly, don't confuse Chomsky with Normsky, the former is a radical professor at MIT in the States, the latter is, er.. a jerk! This is a serious account of corporate politics and clearly draws the battlelines of the class war being waged against us.

It was taped at MITand he conducts it rather like a lecture, giving comprehensive references to authorities and articles as he goes along. A peculiar, though very important feature, is the use of business publications for assessing the intentions of big business in relation to workers. This is developed from specific local area disputes, through governmental relations, to a world view: where money has become unrestricted in the computer age.
Chomsky states that big business, and not government, is the driving force for the mess we're all in. "Government has the defect of being potentially democratic," whereas "Companies are perfect tyrannies." The "shadow" of government has a part to play - it changes, or just agrees to ignore the law, and invests public money to develop the means to suppress workers e.g. the police force (don't forget, Thatcher's first act took on becoming Prime Minister after the St Francis speech on the steps of 10 Downing St was to give a pay rise to the police).

Other worrying phenomena in today's society, which are naturally of immediate concern to most people: crime, violence, insecurity in general, are outlined in the context of a plan. The drive to reduce western economies to third world levels, as far as workers are concerned, makes sense if you're hugely rich. Why pay for workers' benefits when you can be making huge profits. Many of us can see this clearly already, but obviously not enough of us or we'd have defended ourselves more effectively. The authority with which Chomsky relates this analysis, backed up with the words and deeds of big business interests, is a useful reference point, and will inspire greater defence against the suppression of non moneyed interest.

A last note about the format: many people don't have the time to read books but can listen to this quite easily. Buy a copy, and tape it for your friends.

MF

LETTERS

Dear Black Flag,

Your article "If Voting Changed Anything" in BF 207 puts the Black Flag collective in line with the SWP and somewhere to the right of Militant in its position on the Labour Party.

The article attempts a "defence" of anarchist principles re elections off the back of the launch of the Independent Working Class Association, an organisation which, by your own admission, has "no definite commitment to standing candidates, but it is implied in their logic".

The IWCA is an attempt to bring ordinary people together to fight for their interests against the political parties of the status quo. Its basis is, simply, the establishment of the political independence of the working class. It is community based, rather than workplace based, so as to be as inclusive as possible - and on the basis that there is nothing radical per se in trade union struggles, which are too often sectional in their intent - and the attacks on housing and benefit rights being lined up by the establishment - Tory and Labour - in the years ahead -are aimed at working class communities and need to be fought on that basis.

The IWCA is not an electoral movement. It is not tied to any one tactic regardless of circumstance and opportunity. However, why should we rule out challenging Labuor in local council elections either as a means of publicising local struggles or as a means of making such elections referendums on, Labour's policies?

Blair's Labour is unequivocally hostile to the working class. It is committed to the end of universal welfare. It needs to be opposed as the class enemy in practice. That should be clear enough, but not according to Black Flag. "What would the reaction be of the black or Asian communities in East London if an intervention let a fascist in?" When Derek Beackon was elected he did so with the majority of the left calling for a vote FOR Labour! The then Labour candidate James Hunt released scaremongering statistics to show the likelihood of a BNP victory and the end result was more people voted BNP because they thought they could win. The Labour vote is already split by the BNP. The BNP got in because there no radical challenge to Labour, not because the vote was split to the left.

In August 94 Labour and the Liberals got together to ask central government for more money for housing in Tower Hamlets. At the time 4.2% of the housing stock was empty. Before coming into office Labour damned the Liberals for underspending. Since gaining office they've made £20 million in social service cuts on the basis the Liberals overspent yet still found £85K to appoint Sylvie Pierce as Chief Executive.

People in Tower Hamlets and other working class communities have had to deal with this bullshit for years. They've also had to deal with a left which instead of organising resistance to it has chosen to cheerlead for the Labour Party. In consequence the BNP have been able to pose as a radical alternative simply by being anti-Labour. In short, it wasn't the presence of a radical working class alternative to Labour that let the BNP in, it was the absence of one. (If you think Militant Labour's campaign for "real Labourism" constituted that, as your article suggested, the rot's gone further than we thought.)

The choice is simple, for Labour or for the working class. Perhaps the black and Asian voters you're so concerned with might also like a choice between a BNP which believes in compuslory repatriation and a Labour Party which represents repatriation through starvation - the denial of benefits? Do black and Asian working class voters not have political interests in relation to housing, education, etc, or are they only concerned with the "Narrow anti-fascism" the anarchist movement so often claims is the sole interest of AFA?

There's no real point in rehashing the historical debates about whether the "left" should fight in elections or not. The left in the UK exists only as a playground for middle class radicals. It's a sad indictment that when someone tries to do something to change that the purists around Black Flag offer as their contribution "do nothing - in case you split the Labour vote".

Yours

R.Duran for the IWCA

REPLY: Are you sure you read my article? Standing candidates in elections ***is*** implied in your logic, you are the ones who need to be clearer.

Representatives of the IWCA seem to be making it all things to all people, such as telling comrades in Liverpool and the North East not to worry about the RCG and other stalinist elements, as they'll be sidelined once it gets going. What are you telling the RCG?

You say the IWCA is going to be community-based, but what's it going to do? You criticise workplace struggles, but there is nothing radical *per se* about community struggles either.

Labour have always been the class enemy as far as we are concerned. It hasn't taken Blair for us to wake up and stop jumping through the hoops of critical /uncritical etc. support the left has done for years. (And indeed, with the exception of yourselves continue to do, albeit at a distance with the SLP). That's not to say that we think the same of all Labour Party *members*, of course.

What you haven't said is in what way things are different from the 20s and 30s when the Communist Party and the ILP stood against Labour. Labour are more right wing now, but then the CP and ILP had far greater support than the left of today.

At no point do I suggest Militant are a radical working class alternative, quite the opposite is the case. The article even states that they are associated with Labour in peoples' minds, that's some leap you've made.

You imply that black people and Asians in Britain have only a passive choice between compulsory repatriation or repatriation through starvation. Elections re-inforce this passivity, you elect someone else to do it for you. There is another tradition in those same communities which belies the racist myths of Asian passivity, that of self-organised resistance - the Newham 8 and 7, the Tower Hamlets 9, SNAP - all spring to mind.

Nor did I notice anyone condemn the "narrow anti-fascism" of AFA. It's obvious that AFA is a single issue campaign. Perhaps you're mixing up anarchist criticism of Red Action, whose interests are limited to anti-fascism and Irish Republicanism?

Despite an inauspicious start and the clear contradictions of some of its backers I still think there's potentially a lot of good could come out of what you're trying to do. I'll judge the IWCA by its actions. When they happen.

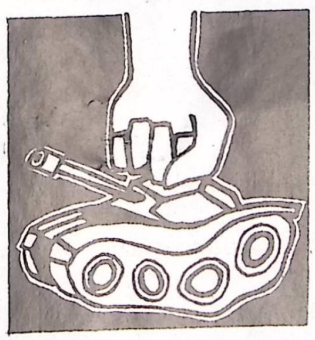
MH

LETTERS

If you are interested in facts rather than fantasies, here are some comments on your "Warning" about the Spies for Peace (No.207,p4). If you wish to attack me by the way, you can do it quite openly; unlike some other anarchists I do not resort to lawyers or gangsters for protection.
It is not true that I am "now investigating the activities of Spies for Peace" in 1963; I am hardly likely to do so since I was one of them and the author of all the authoritative accounts of their activities (from the Guardian in April 1966 to the Raven in Autumn 1988). If it matters, by the way, they were not an "active Scottish anarchist divergence from CND", they were neither Scottish nor anarchist and they came from the Committee of 100.
I was not an "associate" of H.Montgomery Hyde; he was an Honorary Associate of the Rationalist press Association, of which I was the managing director. I was not concerned with "re-opening the case" of the organisation of the escape of George Blake from prison by Pat Pottle and Michael Randle in 1966; my part was confined to telling Montgomery hyde twenty years later on the only occasion we met, when he was going to blame it on CND, that it had nothing to do with CND (or the Committee of 100) but was the action of independent individuals, whom I naturally did not identify but whose identities he easily established from previously published evidence.
What is happening now is that several people are separately trying to arrange for the production of a television programme on the Spies for Peace; I have given all of them as much help as I can, naturally without identifying anyone involved. If you want any more information on the subject you can ask me directly, there is no need to resort to insult or innuendo.

Nicolas Walter
London May 96

Reply: Some of the prime movers in Spies for Peace are now dead or very ill. This is why Nicolas Walter thinks it is safe to publicise their activities. But just as in the case of Pottle and Randle, the liberty of others involved could be at stake. It is naive to imagine that such matters can be innocently brought into public view without establishment circles taking an interest. We will say no more on the matter, and advise others to do the same.



Answers to Quiz

1. The realisation that after the US Marines suppressed the mutiny, leaving the walls crumbling, it would cost so much more to restore it than to to demolish it. It is now a profitable pleasure centre for visitors to San Francisco.

2. Crown Prince Wilhelm, son of German Emperor Wilhelm ('Kaiser Bill'), was derided in the British press as *Little Willy* in World War I. After he made a speech referring to himself as the Tool of Destiny, his name entered Cockney slang (and later general euphemism) for a penis.

3. To take the piss out of someone is to deflate them. The 'mick' is an abbreviation for the medical term micturine. It's nothing to do with being Irish as sensitive pro-nats now sometimes allege!

4. The CIA created the Internet in order to have means of communication in the event of nuclear breakdown. They turned to their files on brilliant graduates coming out of the hippy/protest culture, unable to land jobs, with experience in clandestinity, and employed them, through intermediate scientific or academic circles. An unforeseen result was that it spread so rapidly all governments are now frantically trying to work out means of controlling free access.

5. Frances Adams, an eight year old Hampshire girl, was raped, murdered and chopped to pieces. The press referred to her as Sweet Fanny Adams. A cruel Army joke dubbed tinned bully beef rations Sweet Fanny Adams. During the first World War soldiers' French 'San Fairy Ann' (Ca ne fait rien), 'nothing much', induced another quip for the choice of menu "SFA or SFA". Inevitably the initials became "Sweet Fuck All" and 'Fanny' became a sexist name for the vagina. Her murderer was forgotten but the victim's very name became a laughing-stock.

6. Cigarette smoking.

Black Flag Finances 22/5/1994 - 18/6/1996

In		Out	
Sales /subs	682.50	Postage	447.81
Donations *	609.00	Stationery	2.00
Royalties	15.12	Printing #205	759.32
Loan	200.00	Printing #206	966.51
		Printing # 207	878.70
Total	1506.62	Total	3054.34

* Donations

MS £5, JP £64, SH, Texas £6, Mike V. £5, MH £118, Mike W. £25; PL, W11 £50; FW, Rochdale £9; RGC, York £10; JB SE4 £24; RB, Brighton £30; Mark £20; SH, Thirsk £4; ARB £2; RS £10; AT, S.Yorks £44.

IN MEMORY OF ALBERT MELTZER - JP £50; Jerry & Barbara, SE13 £50 MH £100
Thanks for all your donations. Apologies to anyone not credited, I'm afraid our accounts have been a bit hard to follow of late,
Mike Ward.

Anarcho-Quiz

1. What persuaded the US Government to close down the notorious and inhuman Alcatraz Island prison when years of nation-wide moral indignation and peaceful protest had failed?

2. Who was the original 'Little Willy' and how did his name come into present English slang?

3. Who or what was the Mick or micky we take out of someone?

4. What modern invention do we owe in part to anarchist-minded students?

5. Who was Sweet Fanny Adams and why did she become an object of derision?

6. What secret vice, or harmless pleasure, practised by ladies of the Turkish harem, was adopted by French soldiers in the Crimean war and is now regarded as a worldwide health hazard?

answers on page 35

FIVE YEARS FOR GRAFFITI - FREE SIMON SUNDERLAND

On March 12th 1996 Simon Sunderland was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment at Sheffield Crown Court for graffiti art done in 1991-2. Most of his work was carried out on derelict and now demolished sites. Sheffield council and the press portrayed him, somewhat bizarrely, as responsible for the lack of business investment in the city and the poor health of residents.

The council claims that it cost them £7000 to remove his work. This is the same council that pissed away millions on their student olympics.

The absurdly draconian sentence is meant as a deterrent to any of us who want to use public space to show our defiance of the status quo. Blair and Jack Straw's rantings about how graffiti affects the quality of life seem to be striking a chord with the left and even with anarchist ideas about community control. But we will not allow courts or politicians to dictate to us.

the campaign to support Simon and overturn his sentence needs all the help it can get and is desperately short of money.

For more information contact:

FREE SIMON SUTHERLAND CAMPAIGN
87 DYLWAYS
CAMBERWELL
LONDON SE5 8HW

FREE SIMON SUTHERLAND CAMPAIGN
C/O 18 WENTWORTH ROAD
JUMP
BARNSLEY
S74 0JY

WRITE TO: SIMON SUNDERLAND RR1391
HMP EVERTHORPE
E WING
BROUGH
NORTH HUMBERSIDE HU15 1RA

CELEBRATION OF ANARCHISM 1996

A 'Summer School' of debate and discussion, with relevance to a changing world.

Saturday 24th August 1996

Govanhill Neighbourhood Centre, Daisy Street.

Themes include: Anti-election campaigns, resisting the jobseeker's allowance, egoism & anarchy, community & education cuts campaign, computer nerds and technological despotism

If you would simply like more info: write to Robert Lynn, 151 Gallowgate, Glasgow G1 5AX or phone 0141-226-5066 (and leave a message), 634-1126 (John) or 427-6398. Fax 552-5519 or e mail: 9269381M@student.gla.ac.uk